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CHILDREN

OF

The Covenant.

BY

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ANDREW HART KERR

ANDREW HART KERR, JR.

"And that from a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus."—2 *Tim.* iii. 15.

Andrew Hart Kerr, Jr.

NDREW HART, son of Rev. Andrew Hart Kerr, D. D., and Mrs. Mary Indiana C. Kerr, was born in Davidson County, Tenn., within a short distance of The Hermitage, the well-known residence of President Jackson, on the 10th of November, 1853. In the line of his paternal ancestry, he was the grandson of Rev. John Rice Kerr, who spent the earlier part of his life a Ruling Elder in great usefulness in Albemarle County, Va., and having afterwards removed to Kentucky, and having been ordained to the gospel ministry, laboured there until the close of his life greatly honoured and beloved. In the same line he was the great grandson of Colonel Bennett Henderson, whose

name is intimately associated with the history of Albemarle County, Va. On his mother's side he was the grandson of Major William C. Ward, of Nottoway County, Va., and great grandson of William Jones, of Amelia County, Va. Through these family branches he was connected with a long line of pious ancestry, running back through a succession of men who feared God and kept His commandments to the days of covenanting in Scotland.

There are many circumstances connected with the birth of this truly remarkable boy, that are worthy of mention. There is only one, however, to which in this brief sketch we can allude. His birth was attended with great difficulty. For a considerable length of time after his birth respiration failed to ensue. His life hung trembling in the balance. It was announced to the anxious parents, and in great agony of spirit they wrestled in prayer with God, mutually covenanting with each other, that, if it should please God to spare his life, they would train their little one for His kingdom and glory; and they have cause to believe

that it was in immediate and gracious answer to their prayers that the life so full of promise and hope was given to them.

At the earliest moment at which it was convenient to do so, he was publicly and solemnly dedicated to God in the ordinance of baptism. This service was conducted by the Rev. John T. Edgar, D. D., at that time the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, Tenn. Owing to the protracted illness of the mother, the ordinance was administered in the parlor of Dr. Kerr's house. The occasion was one of peculiar solemnity. There is, perhaps, no one in our church who has a profounder apprehension of the great truth of God's covenant with believing parents and their children, or a more cordial acceptance of that covenant in its relations to their own household, than have the parents of Hart. Those who were acquainted with Dr. Edgar, well remember with what tenderness and power he was accustomed to minister on such occasions, and they will therefore have no difficulty in conceiving the solemnity and impressiveness of the scene. An eye-wit-

ness, referring to it says: "I was present when the believing parents gave him to God, by the hand of the late beloved and excellent Dr. Edgar, of Nashville, Tenn., and then I felt that the Master was there present ratifying and approving the dedication, and often since have I said that if I had no other and higher testimony in proof of the 'doctrines of the covenant' in regard to infant baptism, what I saw and felt upon that occasion would be enough."

Previous to the birth of Hart, Dr. and Mrs. Kerr had been called to surrender three infant sons to the opening grave. This was the only son remaining to them, and it was therefore natural that they should watch with tender, anxious solicitude over his daily life; that they should lay every resource of their being under contribution to provide for his health, his comfort, and his happiness; that to a considerable extent they should live in their child, and live for him, and count no sacrifice too great which would tend to render him cheerful and happy here, and fit him for the bliss of the kingdom of heaven. And his was indeed a sunny na-

ture. No one could look into the manly, thoughtful face, as its image rises before us to-day, and not see there traces of the sunshine that was in the heart. His personal appearance was, as our readers will see from the accompanying likeness, exceedingly prepossessing. This likeness was taken when he was only ten years of age, but it indicates very clearly the leading characteristics of his personal appearance. His form was muscular and well developed for one of his age; sufficiently athletic and vigorous to indicate perfect health. His head, which was unusually large and finely formed, was covered with a massive growth of brown, wavy hair, which under certain changes of the weather arranged itself into masses of distinctly formed curls. His face was broad, open and expressive, usually lighted up with a pleasant smile, and mantled by a brow whose massiveness the wavy hair seemed to be striving in vain to conceal. A pair of large, lustrous eyes, bluish gray in their colour, and under certain shadings of the light tinged with hazel, gave to the whole face an expression of

quiet, pleasant thoughtfulness, and genial good will. When engaged in conversation, his eyes kindled with a glow of intelligent animation, and when excited upon any subject they seemed to flash with intensity of thought. His young companions had only to look for a moment into the face, glowing with quiet thoughtful interest in everything about him, to be assured that he was one in whose friendship they could implicitly confide, and whose nature would never permit him to be selfish, ungenerous or rude. Hence he was a great favorite with his young companions. They loved to visit him, to spend hours in his company, and to listen to his conversations upon all the various topics that awakened their inquiry. He never seemed to have much relish for the ordinary sports of children, or any preference for their companionship. When thrown into their company, as he frequently was, and especially when they visited him at his father's house, he entered with all the earnestness of his nature into the pastimes in which they engaged. His books, marbles, toys were always at their disposal, but in their

games he generally preferred to sit as the umpire, to whom all matters of difference were referred; and while he seemed to enjoy himself, and be as happy as the happiest, contributing in his own unselfish way to the enjoyment of all the rest—the central figure in the group, admired and beloved by every one, he always seemed glad when the time came for the little circle to break, that he might return again to the society and companionship of persons of maturer age. His habits and modes of thought were far in advance of those of his own age. Indeed, his was one of those peculiar natures rarely met with in this world of ours, whose mental development seems to date from early childhood, who "have no youthful period, but from childhood are men and women." His intellectual powers were truly wonderful. "Such gifts as his," says one who knew him well, "are nothing less than genius. With uncommon powers of concentration, he was able to master the most difficult portions of his text book in so short a time as to surprise the teacher that he knew anything of his lesson whatever." "His love of

history and biography was very great, and his readiness in acquiring them may be seen in the fact that when only seven or eight years of age he was accustomed, on returning from the school-room, to repeat almost every important fact and incident that he had heard recited by the class in history." "He read with avidity every newspaper, whether secular or religious, that fell into his hand. During the progress of the war he kept himself fully posted as to the entire history of the struggle, and at its close could relate almost every important movement of the different armies, their successes, reverses, &c." So wonderful was this power of attaining knowledge, that at the time of his death, although only thirteen years of age, his mind was stored with intelligence upon almost every subject that came within his range, and especially upon the great subject of the doctrines, principles and obligations of religion.

His father was his chosen companion. He preferred his society to that of any other person. "Between father and son there existed relations of confidential intimacy rarely found

between parent and child. They looked alike, thought alike, and upon all subjects appeared to have similar tastes and feelings; and while they loved others toward whom such feelings would be natural, their souls seemed knit together in relations which could not be shared with any other." Hart especially delighted to converse with his father upon religious subjects, and it is astonishing to hear from those who were guests in the house, how, when not more than six years of age, when his little feet could not reach the rounds of the chair upon which he was seated, he would sit up until ten, or sometimes even until twelve o'clock, listening apparently with the deepest interest to discussions of difficult and important questions in theology in which his father was engaged, sometimes venturing to ask in his childish way a question, which displayed a wonderful appreciation of that which he heard, and a reach of thought amazing in one so young.

Many incidents have been placed in the writer's hands illustrative of the unusual scope and distinctness of the knowledge which this

dear boy had acquired, at an age when most boys think of little except their daily lessons, and their daily sports. One or two of these will be all that we can introduce.

He was very ardently attached to his native South, and during the struggle was frequently heard to say that he thought the South would finally triumph, because the Lord was on our side. At the close of the war, a friend reminding him of this, said: "You thought God was on our side, but it seems He was against us." To that Hart instantly replied: "You decide the case too soon. The end is not yet; all these things seem to be against us, but the Lord may yet show us that He is for us, and not against us."

When only ten years of age, his father took him on a visit to St. Louis. On board the steamer he met with a gentleman who became very deeply interested in him, and who, more for the purpose of testing his knowledge than with any other view, asked him if he was a Presbyterian. "I am," said Hart; "though not a member, my preference is for the Pres-

byterian church." "Why so?" asked his new made friend. "Because," said Hart, "I believe its doctrines are taught in the Bible." "Well," said his friend, "I am a Baptist and believe in immersion." "And why," asked Hart, "do you believe in immersion?" "Because the Bible says that Christ went down into the water and came up out of the water." "And what of that?" asked Hart. "Well," said his friend, "He was baptized for our example, and we ought to be baptized in the same way." "Then," said Hart, "Peter says we are baptized for the remission of sins, and if Christ was baptized as our example, he must have been baptized for the remission of His sins, but He had no sins to remit." "Why then," said his friend, "was Christ baptized?"

Hart—"The Bible says to fulfil all righteousness."

Friend—"What does that mean?"

Hart—"It means that Christ came to be the Priest of His church, and as the first priests were set apart publicly to their office, so Christ was, by the baptism of John, set apart to His office."

Friend—"How were the old priests set apart?"

Hart—"By anointing them with oil, poured from a horn, upon their heads."

Friend—"How do you know that?"

Hart—"I heard my father read it from the Bible."

The friend then changed the subject, and professing to be an Arminian, asked Hart if he believed in the doctrine of Election. Hart replied that he did, and the friend then asked what he understood by Election. Fortunately Hart had but a short time before heard a sermon from his father, in which the whole subject of Election had been presented in a plain and striking way. He immediately replied to his friend that he would answer him, if he would permit him to ask a few questions. The friend consented, and the following conversation took place:

Hart—"Are you a christian?"

Friend—"I hope I am."

Hart—"Did you convert your soul, or did God do it?"

Friend—"I trust it was the work of God."

Hart—"Was it by accident or was it from design that you were converted?"

Friend—"It was from design of course."

Hart—"When did God first design to do it?"

His friend here hesitated, but Hart pressed the question whether this design of God to convert his soul was from eternity, or was formed at the time when the conversion actually took place. His friend refused to answer, and Hart then said: "If it was in time that God determined to convert you, He then knew something that He never knew before; and to admit that, is to admit that He is not God. His friend did not attempt to meet his argument, but simply expressed his opposition to the doctrine of eternal Election, when Hart asked him again:

"When God converted your soul, did he not do a good thing?"

"Oh yes," answered his friend.

"Well then," said Hart, "are the good things of God made bad by having age upon them?"

These conversations are introduced, not be-

cause the arguments which they contain have any peculiar force, nor because they would be at all remarkable in a person of mature age; but because they show, especially to our young readers, how diligently this now sainted boy was accustomed to study the doctrines and principles of the church of his fathers, and how ready he was on every proper occasion modestly but firmly to maintain them.

His moral nature was singularly exempt from the vices of childhood and early youth. He was never known to tell a deliberate falsehood, or to utter an oath of any kind whatever. So far from his parents' finding it necessary to inflict any corporeal punishment upon him, they do not remember ever to have administered even a severe rebuke.

If he had the slightest reason to suppose that either father or mother was dissatisfied with anything that he had done, he was unhappy until the impression was removed, or the fault amended. His great desire seemed to be to render his parents happy. Time and again did he astonish them by the tender, loving

manner in which he anticipated their wishes, and complied with what he knew to be their preferences, in circumstances in which they would have expected him, under the impulses of youth, to act in a very different manner. He was remarkable too for his devotion to his sisters. He never seemed to weary in his efforts to please them, and make them happy. He was always ready to sacrifice his own plans and give up his own pleasures to serve and accommodate them. His knife, his pens, his paper, his books, his toys and sweatmeats were always at their command. He was ready to do anything to promote their happiness. It has been often said that a boy is best known by his conduct toward his sisters. If he has a noble, generous, loving nature, it will manifest itself in the unselfish devotion and manly courtesy with which he will act toward his sisters within the privacy of the family circle. Tried by this standard, Hart would have merited the rank of true nobility.

As a student at school, Hart was the same consistent, manly, conscientious boy that we

have seen him to be at home. Respectful, courteous and affectionate to his teacher, he was never known to enter the school-room without a thorough preparation of his lessons. His parents did not find it necessary on even a single occasion during all his course of study to admonish him to prepare his lessons. Such was his devotion to his books, and such the facility with which he mastered them, that his faultless recitations were the admiration of every teacher to whom he was sent. He would not permit himself to attempt a recitation unless he felt sure that he was fully prepared for it; and it was always his rule to recite in language of his own, that his teacher might see that he was not simply quoting from memory the words of an author whose meaning he did not understand, but that he had imbibed the truths which the lesson contained, and made them his own.

The religious life of Hart dates back from a very early period of childhood. As soon as he was capable of thinking upon any subject at all, his thoughts were studiously and con-

stantly directed by his parents to the great subject of religion. His father, especially, devoted much of his time to the cultivation of the religious life of his dear boy. Feeling, as every Christian parent should, that religion is the one great concern and aim of life, he endeavoured to make everything subservient to its interests. Hence he sought every opportunity to impress its lessons upon him. In his accustomed walks through the forest for devotional purposes, or for study or recreation, Hart was his constant companion, and these were his father's favourite seasons of spiritual instruction. As they walked together, hand in hand through the grove—the trees, the birds, the sheep, the cattle, the winds, the clouds, &c., &c., were all employed by the anxious father to impress upon the heart of his boy some great and essential truth; and when on these strolls through the woods, a favourable opportunity was afforded, they would often bow down together in prayer, while the father, with swelling heart and flowing tears, would pour out his prayers for the conversion and salva-

tion of his child. And even when so busied with studies during these walks as to be unable to devote his time to conversation upon the various topics that would interest his child,—he was accustomed to give audible utterance to the thoughts passing through his mind, and thus interest and impress him.

These interviews with his father, in which religion was presented as the great duty and happiness of life, were, from the very first, the delight of young Hart. Nothing would please him so much as to have his father take him with him, and converse with him upon these subjects. At one time the glowing countenance, and at another the flowing tears would reveal the deep emotions of his heart, and indicate the strong and vivid impressions made upon his mind.

From the time at which Hart first learned to construct sentences, he was taught morning and evening to engage in prayer. And this exercise soon became delightful to him. He learned to pray in his own words, and to ask in his simple childlike manner for the particu-

lar blessings which he felt that he needed. Under no circumstances would he forego the evident pleasure which he found in these approaches to the throne of grace. It mattered not how late might be the hour of retiring, or how weary he might be in body or mind, he always knelt with reverence beside his bed and engaged devoutly in prayer; and many circumstances connected with his last sickness evince the fact that these had been seasons of real communion with God.

The delight with which even in early childhood he listened to the reading of the Scriptures, the pleasure which he seemed to find in singing those hymns which are most devotional and spiritual, the interest which he seemed to feel in the ordinances of public worship, and the spirit of true childlike trust in God and obedience to His will, which seemed to pervade all his daily life, led his parents to indulge the hope that at a very early period of his life his heart had been renewed by the Holy Spirit, and that he was daily under the guidance of that blessed and holy One. They therefore

looked forward with great earnestness and prayerfulness to the time when he should make a public profession of religion, and be admitted to the communion table. The conversion of his sister Mary, of which we shall have occasion to speak hereafter, and which took place when he was not quite seven years of age, made a very deep impression upon him, and was no doubt one of the links in the chain of providences by which he was being prepared for the kingdom of heaven. Although too young to understand fully the nature of the scene which he was witnessing, he was a most intensely interested and deeply affected observer, and it was not until near the dawn of morning that he was able to compose himself sufficiently to fall asleep. The next morning his father called him to him, and taking him out alone, explained to him, in the simplest and tenderest terms, how mercifully God had brought his sister to see that she was a poor lost sinner, and to plead for His mercy; how He had given her a new heart, enabling and inclining her to trust in the Lord Jesus for

salvation; that now she was a child of God, and that bye-and-bye she would go to live in heaven with her dear little brothers and sisters. He told Hart how much he hoped and how earnestly he prayed that God would give him a new heart to love and trust the Saviour, so that the whole family might live together unbroken in heaven. This interview made a deep impression upon him, and was another of the many links in the chain.

Although, as we have said, his parents were deeply solicitous that he should publicly profess Christ before men, they hesitated to encourage a step of so much importance and solemnity, on account of his extreme youth. Finally, however, after much reflection and prayer, his father appointed a communion season with special reference to such a step, designing to bring the whole matter before the mind of his son, and counsel and pray with him in reference to his duty and privilege. A train of unforeseen circumstances, not at all connected with Hart's religious history and state, but of such a character that they could

not be avoided, were thrown around him, and these made it best, in the judgment of the father, to delay the matter until the next communion season. Before that period arrived it had pleased God to call him away, and he had gone, as we trust, to the communion of the blessed above.

We are now brought to the closing scenes in the life whose early and striking development we have been seeking to trace. In the autumn of the year 1866, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church South convened in Memphis, Tenn. As it was felt to be a meeting of great interest and importance to the church, a large number of persons gathered from all parts of the country to attend its sessions. Hart came as the companion of his father, who was the commissioner from the Presbytery of Memphis. Immediately upon the organization of the Assembly, Dr. Kerr was chosen as its Moderator, and presided with great acceptance over that noble body of men, whose deliberations were characterised by the greatest harmony and cordiality. During all these delibe-

rations, Hart, who was then thirteen years of age, was a constant and deeply interested spectator, looking with evident admiration and reverence upon the venerable men who rose, one after another, to address the Assembly, and listening with intense interest to the debates upon the great questions affecting the welfare of the church. Many who were members of that Assembly vividly recall the manly little form sitting erect in the midst of the gray haired men around him; the modest, boyish expression of the face; the quick glance and intelligent flash of the eye; the play of the different emotions as they chased each other over the features, showing the intelligent appreciation and earnest interest taken in every question. Many recollect the expression of mingled pride and thankfulness with which the father looked down from the Moderator's chair upon his deeply interested boy. Alas! we little thought that so soon the manly form would be stilled, the beaming eye closed, and the hopes of parents and friends prostrated in the dust.

The General Assembly closed its sessions on

the afternoon of Tuesday, 27th of November. During the whole of the summer and fall, the cholera had, with greater or less violence, prevailed in Memphis, and for some time it had been apprehended that it might be unsafe for the Assembly to meet; but after the first of October it was supposed to have disappeared, and but little anxiety was felt upon the subject at the time when the Assembly convened.

Toward the latter part of the session, however, many symptoms of the presence of the fearful plague were discovered. Many members of the Assembly had reason to apprehend that its poisonous influences were already at work in their systems, and quite a number of them were violently attacked either before leaving the city, or on their way to their homes, with symptoms of the dreadful scourge. The parting of the members of the Assembly was therefore hurried, and yet tender and cordial. The session had been unusually long, the discussions had been animated and protracted. The brethren had come to know and love each other, and they parted many of them

in tears. Dr. Kerr had remained long at the church, receiving the congratulations of his friends and brethren upon the very able and successful manner in which he had discharged the delicate and difficult duties of his office. At length he returned to the hotel with his son, expecting on the morrow to return to his home and family in the country. He had been at the hotel but a short time, when, between seven and eight o'clock in the evening, Hart was suddenly and violently seized with the cholera. The surprise and sorrow of his relatives and friends cannot be described. But an hour before they had conceived him to be in the enjoyment of perfect health; now they saw him grappling with a disease which no skill of the physician could baffle, and no power of medicine relieve. As the father stood with head bowed in sorrow by the bedside, as weeping relatives gathered one by one about the couch, as the men of God, fresh from the councils of the Assembly, came with muffled step and tearful eye to express their sympathy, there was a scene of sorrow such as is too often witnessed in this world of tears.

But with him who was the central figure in the group, there was no manifestation either of surprise or fear. Long since, young as he was, he had learned to love and trust the blessed Saviour, and to feel that the everlasting arms were underneath him. The triumphs of his death-bed almost surpass the power of language to express. The following is the testimony of an eye-witness, which for its simplicity and tenderness, we prefer to give substantially in the language in which it was prepared at the time for our weekly religious press:

"When he was informed that he would probably not get well, and his father exhorted him to place his trust in his Saviour, and to give his heart to God, he prayed long, earnestly, and with remarkable force and intelligence, for mercy and forgiveness through the merits of a crucified Redeemer, in whom alone he relied for salvation. When he concluded his prayer, in which he exhibited a thorough acquaintance with the whole plan of salvation through the Cross, he gave the most indubitable assurance of his acceptance and reconciliation in Christ,

and continued to rejoice and praise God, and to speak of the preciousness of the blessed Saviour, until his strength was too far spent to talk. The Rev. Drs. Adger and Joseph R. Wilson, of the General Assembly, were present, and enquired faithfully into the ground of his hope. When he told them that he knew, young as he was, that he was a sinner, and that he must be saved, if saved at all, through the atoning merits of a crucified Redeemer, and that he had given his whole heart to God, and now felt that he would rather go and stay with Christ and with the angels, than stay in a world of sin and sorrow, these good men could not refrain from exclaiming Glory! glory!! glory to God in the highest!!!

"As they heard such clear evidence of God's faithfulness to His promises in this child of the Covenant, they bid the crushed father rejoice, and withhold his tears in the midst of such splendid manifestations of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost.

"Some hours before his death he requested that the hymn, 'Rock of Ages,' should be sung,

and joined in the singing, at the same time shouting and clapping his hands in the happiest manner. Meanwhile he exhorted all present to meet him in heaven, sending similar messages to his mother and sisters, and to other absent ones, and entreating all not to weep for him, but rather rejoice in the goodness and glory of God, who was going to take him from a world of sin and trouble up to Himself, where he would very soon be singing with angels, and where he would take his seat in the General Assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven.

"No doubt, when he made this last remark, his thoughts were running on the General Assembly which he had a few hours before seen his father preside over and close. Later he requested those present to sing, 'Come humble sinner,' and again raising himself almost to a sitting posture, he repeated,

'I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode,'

in clear, distinct tones, and said, 'Let us all sing.' At one time, when his distressed father was weeping over, and begging for grace to his 'poor boy,'

for the last struggle, he spoke up quickly and said, 'Pa, I am not poor, I am rich.'

"He very often repeated the first line of that hymn which begins, 'Lord I am thine, entirely thine," and evidently appreciated to the fullest extent its meaning.

"Calmly he bid each one present 'good-bye,' exhorting them to meet him in heaven. He gave to his sister Mary, who was present, a kiss for his mother and sisters who were absent, calling each by name, saying, 'Tell ma not to be distressed about me; that I died happy in Jesus, and have gone to heaven, where she and my little sisters must meet me.' When asked if he was afraid to die, he promptly replied 'No, no, who would be afraid to meet his Maker's face, with Jesus for his friend? I know in whom I trust.' He then spoke of different relatives and friends who had gone before, and whom he expected to meet in heaven, and said, 'I love my father and my mother, and my sisters very much, but I love Jesus more, and would rather go to Him than stay here.'

"He suffered comparatively little, and never

shed a tear from the time he was taken sick till he breathed his last. He was in full possession of his mental faculties, to all appearance, up to the instant when the breath left his body; and until he could speak no longer, said that his trust was in the Lord; that he was free from all suffering, and was dying peaceful and happy. When he could no longer utter words, he responded with his head to questions asked and sentiments expressed, and remained conscious to the last, never for a moment doubting or wavering in his faith and hope of salvation through Christ Jesus as his Redeemer."

"Thus," continues the narrator, "went out from earth one of the brightest minds I ever knew; and a bud of promise has thus early dropped from its stem, of which there was greater hope than of any left behind. But as he said himself, 'It is all right. God knows what is best.'"

At ten o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, the 28th of November, 1866, the spirit took its flight. The same day a train of sorrowing friends, in the midst of the sympathies

of a whole city, bore the remains to the burying ground of Dr. Kerr, at his home in the northern part of the county, where they remained until a short time ago, when, together with those of his two sisters, they were removed to Elmwood Cemetery, near Memphis. There, in one of the most attractive spots in that beautiful burying ground, watched over and tended with loving care, they rest until it shall please our heavenly Father to awaken them from their sleep that "they may obtain a better resurrection."

SARAH WARD KERR.

SARAH WARD KERR.

"Out of the mouth of Babes and Sucklings Thou hast perfected Praise."—*Matt.* xxi. 16.

Sarah Ward Kerr.

SARAH WARD, daughter of Rev. Dr. A. H. Kerr, and Mrs. Mary Indiana C. Kerr, was born at the family homestead, in the northern part of Shelby County, Tenn., on the 13th day of June, 1859. The name Sarah, which she received at her baptism, was the name of both her grand-mothers, Mrs. Sarah Ward, and Mrs. Sarah Kerr. It was also rendered doubly dear by the fact that it had been borne by an older sister, who had died at four years of age. The beautiful homestead with which little Sallie's earliest recollections were associated, and which was some twenty miles distant from the city of Memphis, still remains as the country residence of Dr. Kerr, to which

he is accustomed to retreat with his family during the summer for relief from the noise and heat and dust of the city. The large and commodious house in which she was born, perished by the hand of an incendiary, and its place has been supplied by an humbler and less attractive one; but the groves of forest oak, the lawns and walks with which her feet were familiar, still remain, with all their warm, tender associations clustering about them.

Here in the midst of the calm quietude of a country life, surrounded by a large circle of relatives to whom she was tenderly attached, her first joyous impressions of home and home-life were formed.

Childhood is in all its great essential characteristics the same everywhere. He who has read the life of one child may in a certain sense be said to have read the life of all children. The innocence, the sportiveness, the exuberance of joyous life, the freedom from anxiety and care, the spirit of confiding trust, and simple-hearted, tender love—these, which make the joy of one household, are found to a

certain extent in all. The habits of childhood, its pursuits, amusements, and companionships, its infirmities, trials and crosses, are much the same everywhere. A casual observer might detect no difference at all. But to the anxious parent, who carefully studies the disposition of his children from day to day; or to the faithful teacher who compares mind with mind in the process of discipline and culture, there appear strongly marked outlines of character, separating into classes as clearly and distinctly de fined as those which obtain among persons of mature age. Even within these classes, too, there are slighter shades of difference in temperament and disposition which clearly distinguish one character from another.

It is, therefore, with the characters of children, as it is with their faces. The general outlines and prominent features are in many cases the same, but there are delicate lineaments, that distinguish one from the other, so that they cannot be confounded.

While this is true in reference to all children without exception, it is pre-eminently true in

reference to some with whom we occasionally meet. There are those so entirely different in temper and disposition from others around them, that they constitute a class to themselves peculiar and I had almost said *anomalous*. Such certainly was Hart, the noble gifted boy of whom we have already written. And such was little Sallie whose history we now purpose to sketch. She was another of those remarkable ones, whom God for purposes of His own love and mercy has been pleased to enrich with rare and peculiar endowments.

All that has been said in reference to the early development of mind and character in Hart, will apply with equal force to Sallie. Indeed this early development appears yet more remarkably in her. The peculiar thirst for knowledge, which we have noticed in him, developed itself in her at a still earlier period of life. She learned to read, as we are informed by her parents, at so early an age that at the time of her death, although only eight years of age, she could not recall the time or the circumstances under which she learned; her ear-

liest recollections being of books, suited to the capacity of a child, which she was engaged in reading. There was never the slightest difficulty in securing from her the careful and faithful preparation of the lessons assigned her by teachers. So eager was her desire to learn that the most difficult tasks became light. Her lessons were always well and accurately prepared and recited in such a manner as to evidence conclusively that she understood them fully, and had not simply committed them by rote. Nor was she content with the preparation, however thorough and accurate, of the lessons assigned her by her teachers. Instead of confining herself to the hours of study spent in the school-room, and forsaking her books for play when the hours of school were over, she was accustomed to retire to her room, and there spend hours in reading with pleasure and with profit, such books as were suited to the capacities and tastes of a thoughtful child. Her parents, discovering her fondness for reading, were careful to provide her with such books and papers as would give a healthful exercise to her mind and

impart wholesome moral lessons, and thus she early acquired a taste for books of a wholesome and instructive character, which, if she had lived, would no doubt have kept her from acquiring a taste for the flimsy, fictitious literature which is poisoning the minds and corrupting the hearts of our youth at the present day.

Her parents record of her that she was never satisfied unless she understood as fully as she could every subject brought before her mind. If anything was said in her presence which she did not understand, she would ask question after question earnestly, and yet modestly, until she received the information she wished. If a word was used in conversation whose meaning she did not know, she would go quietly to her father's library and refer to the dictionary for its meaning. Often, before she had strength even to lift the large quarto from the shelf, she would ask to have it placed upon the floor for her that she might seek for the meaning of a word. When wearied with her work or her toys, she would often, when only five or six years of age, prop herself in the bed with pil-

lows, and read aloud to herself from some favourite book, throwing into every sentence the full pathos and feeling of her deeply affected and interested nature; and thus she became by her own tuition, so exquisite as a reader that it was the delight of her friends to listen to her reading.

Her Bible occupied an important place in these daily readings. While poring over its pages she often became so much absorbed as to be unconscious of the passage of time, and and would continue reading and re-reading for hours at a time, stopping as she read to repeat to herself again and again her favourite passages and those which were of most interest to her, and uttering such ejaculations as to prove that she deeply apprehended the precious truth she was receiving into her mind.

She gave to everything about her serious and careful thought. Her opinions upon any subject were formed slowly and with considerable hesitation; but when once formed, she adhered to them with great firmness, and it

was with difficulty that she could be led to change them.

When we come to speak of the moral character of little Sallie, we must of course speak of it as depraved. There is no perfection in this world. There is "none righteous, no not one." There is no one whose character is without fault. When our Saviour said in the temple concerning the sinful woman, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone," He meant to teach us the great truth that we are all sinners, and that imperfection attaches to everything we do. We would not, therefore, have our young readers think that little Sallie was perfect. She had her defects and weaknesses, her faults and imperfections. She had her temptations and trials, as well as they; and yet her nature was so gentle and loving, so full of generosity and good will, that all who came in contact with it felt its warm and constraining influence. These noble traits of character appeared continually in all her relations to her companions, acquaintances and friends. They appeared especially in her inter-

course with brothers and sisters under the parental roof, where her unselfish, generous, confiding nature made her the object of tenderest love to all around her. She was especially remarkable for the veneration she always had for her parents, and the unquestioning obedience she rendered to them in all their commands. So completely was she accustomed to subordinate her own will to that of her parents, that they never found it necessary to use any severe discipline of any kind with her, and she would have felt dishonoured if any correction had been administered to her beyond words of kindest and tenderest admonition. All that she required was to know what her father and mother thought it right for her to do, and it was done at once without questioning or complaint.

We have told our young readers that little Sallie was not perfect, that she had her strong temptations and her moments of weakness just as all other children have; and now we will give them an instance of it, and of the manner in which she acted when she had yielded to

temptation, and done what she felt to be wrong.

On one occasion, her feelings were sorely wounded by an inconsiderate child, who seemed to take pleasure in crossing her wishes and doing things which were meant to annoy her. Sallie bore for a long time, as patiently as she could, the vexations; but at length her temper gained the mastery of her, and she retorted upon her little playmate in language of the keenest and unkindest severity. Her father, who was near, though unobserved, and heard all that had passed, waited until his little daughter had become calm after the storm of passion had subsided, and then calling her to him, admonished her in the most tender and faithful manner of the sin she had committed in giving way to the violence of her anger. She listened to him very attentively, and soon became deeply affected, the tears coursing down her cheeks, and her heart seemingly almost broken with the sense of her guilt. Her father permitted her to remain for a few moments weeping by his side, and then told her

that all she could do was to go in secret to God and tell Him how she had sinned, and ask Him for forgiveness. She then repaired weeping to her room, and there remained alone for some little time. After a while, though, she came back to her father with a subdued, peaceful, and even happy face, and when he asked her if she had gone to God with her trouble, she replied:

"Yes, sir, I told Him all—I told Him I had spoken hastily with my lips, and had sinned, and I asked Him for Jesus' sake to forgive me and not let me do so any more."

Her father then asked her why she asked God to forgive her *for Jesus' sake.* Her reply was:

"If I had asked Him forever to forgive me for my own sake, he could not have done it. I am nothing, but Jesus is everything with Him."

Her father asked again:

"Do you think that God has forgiven you for this sin, my child?"

She answered:

"Yes, sir."

"And why do you think so?"

"Because He has said, 'Ask and it shall be given you,' and whatever He has said, He will do; and besides, I have the feeling in my heart that He has forgiven me."

"And did you tell Him anything," asked her father, "about the little child that tempted you?"

"Yes, sir, I asked God to forgive her too, and not to let her do so any more."

"And do you think that from your heart you forgive your little companion?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"Then," said the father, "I also forgive you, but remember that these temptations will come upon you, and you must watch and pray that you may not enter again into temptation."

Our little readers are not to infer from what we have written, that little Sallie was in feeling and tastes, a grown-up woman rather than a child. She had her sports and her diversions, as other children have. She had her little storehouse of toys and playthings, of pic-

ture-books and presents. These she was very fond of looking over, and arranging, and she always took great pleasure in exhibiting them to her young friends, and having them enjoy them with her. But she differed from most children in her great love of retirement and solitude. She loved to be alone. When her toys were to be readjusted, or her first experiences in knitting and sewing were to be gained, or when she had some favourite book to read, she always sought to be alone. On these occasions, it was not unfrequently the case that she became so absorbed as to be entirely unconscious of the passage of time, and to give audible expression to her feelings by singing, in subdued and softened tones, the hymns with which she was most familiar, and which seemed, many of them, to be expressions of the deep yearning emotions of her young heart.

Among those hymns which she oftenest sang in this way were such as these: "The day is past and gone," "Father, whate'er of earthly bliss," "Children of the Heavenly King," &c.

She would also, apparently, without the con-

sciousness that she was doing so audibly, give utterance, from time to time, in a low softened undertone, to such expressions as these: "Merciful God, give me a clean heart." "Gracious Father, write my name in the Lamb's Book of Life." "Name ever dear to me." "Sweet, sweet Heaven." "I'll wear my golden crown with angels bright in Heaven," &c.

The question at what time little Sallie gave her heart to the Lord, is one that cannot be easily determined. We would not assert that she was regenerated in early infancy; and yet it is certain that from the first dawning of her intellectual and moral faculties they were singularly impressible, and readily awakened and interested upon the all-important subject of religion. Perceiving at a very early period her fondness for religious knowledge, her parents took great delight in imparting to her such instruction as would tend to direct her thoughts toward religious things, and give a religious direction to all her course of study. The result of this was seen in her fondness for religious reading, and especially for the best of all

books, the Bible. It was the habit of the mother of little Sallie, while the children were very small to have them kneel at her side nightly and offer their prayers to God; and when they grew a little older, she would send them away, saying: "Now you must go to God by yourself and pray to Him in secret, telling Him the desires of your hearts," giving them suitable instructions as to the manner and spirit in which they should make their approach to God, the duty of prayer, the privilege of prayer, the encouragements given to prayer in the word of God, &c., &c. The blessing of God upon this course of instruction is seen in the fact that upon little Sallie's death-bed, when her mother asked her if she had been praying since she was taken sick, her answer was, "Why, yes, mother, I have prayed all the time."

Of those influences which, aside from tender parental counsel, instruction and prayer, tended to develope in Sallie her peculiar religious character and disposition—those means which God of His great mercy and grace was pleased

to bless under the agency of His Holy Spirit, we may mention two in particular. The first was the influence of a pious, devoted teacher.

It was always the conviction of Dr. Kerr, that it is better, as far as possible, to guard children against the early impressions unfavourable to piety, made by associates who are irreligious and immoral, and to surround them only by such influences as are favourable to their spiritual growth. Hence he employed, as far as possible, a teacher within his own house where his children would be continually within the influence of the home circle, until those principles had been implanted and infixed, which were necessary for their guidance when brought into contact with high school or university life.

Sallie had, therefore, the example and instruction of a Christian teacher, who was, for the time being, a member of her father's family, and a constant companion of those whom she taught. As Sallie was greatly devoted to her teacher, we will introduce here a brief

sketch of this lovely Christian woman, who is now, as we trust, a saint in heaven.

Miss Anna D. Spalding, a grand-daughter of the late Rev. Dr. Johnson, for forty years pastor of the Presbyterian church in Newburg, New York, (with whose memoirs, written by Dr. Carnahan, of Princeton, N. J., many of our readers are familiar,) was for seven years the indefatigable, faithful teacher of the children of Dr. Kerr. An accurate student herself, nothing seemed to give her so much pleasure as to impart to her little charge the knowledge she possessed, and to co-operate with her parents in all their intellectual, moral, and religious culture. In the family circle, in the private retirement and personal conversation of every-day life, the influence of her Christian example, her counsel and instruction, was most beneficial in every respect. The very tenderest relations were established between her and all the members of the family. They loved her as though she was one of the family, and her own feelings toward them were those of a daughter and older sister. Little Sallie was especially

devoted to her—many, many were the precious hours they spent together in affectionate intercourse and endearment. But this delightful relationship was soon to be broken up. In the Providence of God, this dear teacher was to be called to her reward. She was suddenly and violently seized with pneumonia, which rapidly preyed upon her lungs, and it was but a few days until the seal of approaching death was manifestly upon her. When she was informed that her illness must, in all human probability, soon prove fatal, she turned and looked with intense earnestness, and with searching gaze, upon the speaker, and asked, "Do you think so?" And when answered affirmatively, she replied, "You do not know how thankful I am that God has not left me to this hour of weakness and pain to prepare to meet Him. I am not afraid to die. I know whom I have believed. It will be better, far better with me." It was a sad sight to see the little ones clustering about the bed, weeping as if their hearts would break at the thought of the painful separation; but with her all was light. A diary was

kept by Dr. Kerr for the benefit of her widowed mother and brothers and sisters, and this diary shows how triumphant was the victory gained over death.

On the second day after her decease, the members of the church of Delta, of which Dr. K. was pastor, and of which she was a member, together with many other personal friends, assembled at the house of the pastor, where he delivered a brief discourse from the words—Luke ii: 36, 37—"And there was one Anna, a prophetess, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day."

It was a scene of tenderness such as is seldom witnessed, when the pastor opened the diary and read those passages which respected the great grace of God to His hand-maiden, and her glorious triumph over death.

The impression of this scene upon the mind of Sallie was deep and profound. It was one of the instrumentalities being employed by the Holy Spirit in preparing her for His heavenly kingdom.

Then followed the sudden, glorious death of her brother Hart, of which we have already spoken, and which occurred in less than a year after the death of her beloved teacher; then the death of her sister Mary, of which we shall speak very soon—all tending to exert their influence upon the mind of the gifted child, to render her more thoughtful, more devoted to religious duties, religious books and religious companionships, and more serious in her whole character and demeanor.

The last severe trial to which it pleased God to subject her previous to her own fatal illness, was the sudden and alarming sickness of her father, from which it was thought, for many days, that he could not recover. This new trial, following upon so many others, seemed to be more than she could bear. Her flowing tears, the agony with which she would wring her little hands, the frequency with which she would come noiselessly to the bed-side, the intense emotion with which she would look into her father's face, and the tenderness with which she would ask, "Do you feel better now, Pa?"

all these form part of the tender, precious legacy which memory has treasured up for the comfort and solace of stricken hearts. All too were part of the loving discipline by which our Heavenly Father was preparing the dear one for those heavenly mansions into which she was soon to be received.

We now approach the period when, this work of preparation having been accomplished, "an entrance was to be ministered unto her abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." How often, in the experience of a household from which a dear one has been taken away, there are recalled scenes of special tenderness, premonitory, as it were, of the coming separation; in which the spirit seems to have been unconsciously hovering upon the border land, and giving special tokens of its love ere it should plume its wings for a brighter world. How few stricken households there are in which there are not the recollections of such tender interviews, deep heart communings, loving words, gentle acts of kindness, which after the

loved one has gone, have seemed to us as the banking of the fleecy clouds at sunset, which God's hand gathers along the western sky, that the sun may go down in all his golden glory.

Such was the case in the home from which little Sallie was taken. Dr. Kerr had sufficiently recovered from the severe illness to which we have alluded, to leave his home, though in great feebleness, to attend the meeting of the General Assembly at Nashville, Tenn.

As the Moderator of the previous Assembly, the duty devolved upon him to constitute the present Assembly, and to deliver the opening sermon. As he left his home, the family from whom two precious links had already been taken, gathered around him to bid him farewell, their thoughts all intensely and anxiously fixed upon him in his feebleness of body, and in the fatiguing journey and labours before him. The last member of the family upon whose lips he imprinted the parting kiss, was dear little Sallie who had followed him out of the house and to the door of his carriage. As she raised her

lips to receive his parting kiss, there was manifested so much emotion in her countenance, so much tenderness mingled with such inexpressible sadness, that there thrust itself into the mind of the father the torturing inquiry, "Can it be that I am parting with this precious little treasure for the last time?" And the frame of the strong man quivered with emotion, and the great tears flowed down his cheeks as he sought in vain to rid himself of the presentiment.

Meanwhile the carriage rolled away from the door. The husband and father sped upon his journey. The mother and children returned to their accustomed pursuits. But it was not long until again, as so often before, the thoughts and anxieties and sympathies of all the household were turned upon one member. For several days after the departure of Dr. Kerr, Sallie had complained of pain in her throat. For a day or two she was confined to her bed, but on the Tuesday following she was up again, and but little anxiety was felt by the mother and the physician. On Wednesday morning,

however, symptoms of croup had appeared in a violent form.

Dr. John K. Kerr, brother of Rev. Dr. Kerr, and a ruling elder in his church, a man not only of great skill and eminence in his profession, of which he has been a practitioner for thirty or forty years, but of exalted christian character and devoted piety, ministered by the bed-side of the little sufferer, and did all that intelligent skill and sympathising care could do for her relief. The next day (Thursday,) the symptoms had become so alarming that it was deemed necessary to send a telegram for the absent father. The message was conveyed with as much expedition as possible to Memphis, and thence flashed over the wires to Dr. Kerr, at Nashville. It was handed to him while seated at the table of the hotel, surrounded by ministerial brethren and friends, and he immediately arose, saying, "my daughter is dead. It is the Lord, let Him do as seemeth good in His sight." The next train bore the stricken parent to Memphis, where, at the house of his brother, Judge B. L. Kerr, of Memphis, the

following very touching and characteristic letter addressed by Dr. John K. Kerr, the attending physician, to his brother, Judge Kerr, was placed in his hands.

To those who are personally acquainted with the writer, and who know the calmness of his judgment, and the habitual moderation of his language, these simple but eloquent words will convey some just impression of the wonderful exhibitions of the grace of God, that were made in the chamber of the dying one.

BIG CREEK, TENN.,
November 22d, 1867.

This morning I wrote you of the great danger into which Sallie had been brought by croup. I now write to say that at twenty-two minutes to nine o'clock this evening she breathed her last. I have witnessed many deaths, but never one so glorious as this. Oh! sir, if you could have witnessed it, it would have done you good to the last day of your life. How clear were her ideas of the plan of salvation! What kind and appropriate messages she sent to all her absent friends! and what astonishing words of counsel and advice she addressed to those with whom she was surrounded! The scene is but just over; and as I write I am bewildered

by what I have witnessed. In form, as you know, she was but a child *eight years old*, whilst her words and conduct showed to what heights of moral and intellectual truth she had attained. There is, my brother, such a thing as dying grace. Who was it that held up the tiny hand of this little one, as all alone she passed through "the valley and shadow of death," enabling her to shout the praises of Him, who has taken away the fear of the grave and the sting of death? But I must cease, feeling my utter inability to do justice to the exhibitions of the power of the grace of God we have just witnessed. You must wait and learn from those present the full particulars of this truly wonderful scene.

No language can adequately describe the deep and conflicting emotions with which the afflicted father received these tidings. No parent's heart ever yearned with more tenderness over his children than did that of Dr. Kerr. The successive strokes that had come upon him, had by no means dried up the fountains of human grief, or deadened the tender sensibilities of the smitten heart. On the contrary, as one after another had been taken away, the bruised affections had clustered all the more tenderly

around those that remained. To give up this dear, gifted, wonderful child, was a stroke that might well prostrate the heart in the dust. But then, to have her departure so lighted up with the manifest presence and power of God; to feel as though the very gates of heaven had been visibly opened to receive her, and the angelic cohorts sent down to bear her up, how could he do otherwise than rejoice and say with one of old, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour; for He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is His name, and His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation." We are prepared therefore to hear from one who was present, that, "with mingled shouts of joy and tears of grief, the chastened servant of God read this beautiful and touching story of his little christian's triumphant death, and with many grateful expressions, glorified a merciful Heavenly Father for the measure of dying grace vouchsafed his child in answer to ceaseless prayer, offered

from the moment when he received the intelligence of her fatal illness."

But we are keeping our readers away from the hallowed scenes of the chamber of sickness. With a hand almost tremulous with emotion, we draw aside the curtain, feeling that there is more of heaven than of earth within. And oh how ardently we pray that our young readers, as they peruse this narrative, may lift up their hearts in faith and love to the blessed Redeemer, and ask of Him the same rich grace to guide them through the journey of life, and bring them safely to the same blissful and triumphant end.

For the full particulars of the last hours of little Sallie, we are indebted to a favourite cousin, Colonel John S. Kerr, of Memphis, who was present, and an eye-witness of the scene:

"Although little Sallie had been regarded by all who knew her as a child of uncommon endowments * * * it was reserved to the hour of her triumph, when the soul had risen and disencumbered itself as it were of the mortal weight, in readiness for the celestial

flight, for her to display a wealth of mental and spiritual endowment, which filled those who witnessed the scene with unutterable amazement, and fixed impressions upon their minds and hearts which time can never erase.

To the very last moment of her earthly existence, little Sallie appeared to possess her faculties in undiminished vigor, and until within a few minutes of her death was able to talk, and although her breathing was very laboured and difficult, she never for an instant complained, but talked incessantly of her confident hope of glory, and of her trust in the Redeemer, exhorting those near her to prepare for the dying hour.

When told that she would probably not get well, she received the announcement without the slightest apparent agitation; and with a smile radiant with joy, replied:

"I am not afraid to die; my trust is in Jesus."

Her mother inquired of her what she must say to her father for her. She replied promptly:

"Tell Pa how much I love him, and that I

wanted to see him very much, and that I was not afraid to die, for I trust in Jesus as my only hope, and that he must meet me in heaven." Then clasping her hands, and looking up, she said:

"Lord, make me a good child, and prepare me to live in heaven."

After this, addressing those about her bedside, she said:

"You must all pray and meet me in heaven."

Her mother asked:

"Sallie, did you pray, dear, before you were taken sick?"

She replied:

"Why yes, Ma, I prayed all the time."

She asked her also, if it was God's will, if she would rather get well and live longer with her Pa and Ma?

She at once replied:

"Ma, it is not God's will; *He has marked me for death.*"

Then suddenly looking around upon those near her, with an air of earnest inquiry, she asked:

"*Who will write my will?*"

Supposing that she wished to bestow her little treasures upon those she loved, she was asked what it was that she desired to give away.

"Oh," she said, "I don't mean that; *who will write the words I say?*" evidently being impressed with a strong feeling of inspiration.

Again folding her hands and turning her eyes toward heaven, she prayed:

"Lord, make me a good child, and let me trust in Jesus."

Calling her sister Lady, two years older than herself, she said to her:

"Lady, you are getting old; do you love God? You must get ready to die and meet me in heaven. You must pray, and pray *hard*."

Turning to her little sister "Sugie," two years younger than herself, she said:

"Sugie, you must meet me in heaven, too."

When one of the servant women—who a few days before had made a profession of religion, and seemed very happy—came in to see her, clasping her little hands, and smiling joyfully, she exclaimed:

"Glory! Mamy, don't get weary; hold out to meet me in heaven."

And to another servant, a wild, giddy young girl, who was in the habit of ridiculing the prayers of the pious negroes on the place by mocking them, she said:

"Ritta, you must quit those long words of yours, and when you pray, think what you are saying."

Several familiar and encouraging passages of Scripture were repeated to her, to which she responded with great delight. It was inquired of her, who it was that said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?"

Her ready response was:

"Jesus."

In reply to her mother, who asked her again if it was God's will, if she would not be willing to stay on earth with her friends who loved her so much, she said:

"Oh, Ma, I shall be so much better off; I shall be so happy in heaven with sister and

brother, and then I shall have on my golden crown."

She then requested that her friends should sing for her "Children of the Heavenly King," and other Sunday School hymns.

For each of her friends and relatives, she had appropriate words of admonition to offer, and left messages for many who were absent. The name of a favourite cousin being mentioned, she smiled, and with many endearing words, calling him by a pet name she had for him, said:

"Tell him for me how much I love him; for I do love him so much; and tell him that he must meet me in heaven."

To her uncle she said with great earnestness:

"Uncle John, you must give all your children to God, and put your trust in Jesus."

To another relative, as she entered the room, she exclaimed:

"I am going to the kingdom."

Of another she inquired:

"Do you pray? Are you ready to die?" and

said: "I trust in Jesus, and am not afraid to die."

Her cousin Mattie, two years older than herself, came in weeping, and bowed her head upon the side of her bed, when she put her arm about her neck, and patting her on the head, said consolingly:

"Don't cry, *child*, don't grieve for me; I am not afraid to die. You must pray, *child*, and get ready to meet me in heaven."

She again requested that her friends should sing to her, and several hymns were sung, which appeared to give her great delight. When the one which begins, "Father, whate'er of earthly bliss," was sung, she whispered, "So pretty."

After this, she expressed a desire to have the Bible read; and when the 23d Psalm, beginning "The Lord is my Shepherd," was read to her, she said:

"I know it by heart."

The 103d Psalm was also read, and then she said she wanted to hear about the crucifixion. Soon, growing very weak, she said she could not talk, but desired to be talked to, and said:

"Tell me a Bible story; I know about Joseph, tell me about Moses."

Very shortly before she died, and when she was supposed to be too far gone to speak, addressing herself to a young cousin who had just entered the room, she said:

"Willie, I am going to glory; I will never come back here any more; I shall there see sister and brother, and be so happy. There will be no more sorrow, and 'not a wave of trouble roll across this peaceful breast.'"

The very last act of her life displayed the utmost composure. Stripping a ring from her finger, she handed it to her mother, and pointing to her little sister, said:

"For Sugie."

After her sight had failed, and not exceeding five minutes before she ceased to breathe forever, she was asked if she was afraid to die.

In a barely audible whisper she replied:

"No; *I trust in Jesus;*" and these were the last words she ever uttered.

"Behold, what condescending love
Jesus on earth displays,
To babes and sucklings He extends
The riches of His grace."

MARY CLARISSA KERR

MARY CLARISSA KERR.

"Suffer the Little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of God."—*Mark* x. 14.

Mary Clarissa Kerr.

IN the two preceding sketches we have seen how wonderfully the grace of God was manifested in bringing two of the dear children of the church to Jesus, and giving them in childhood the victory over death and the grave. We are now to see this same grace illustrated in one who was permitted to live through the period of youth, which is most fraught with temptation, and to exhibit a life of pure and holy consecration to God in the midst of the allurements and vanities of the world. To many of our young readers, who are tossed themselves upon the same waves of temptation, and would gladly find some safe anchorage from them, it is hoped that these pages

will possess a special interest, as revealing to them the secret of a life spent in the midst of the empty but fascinating pleasures of the world, free from their debasing influence and control—a life, spent in the enjoyment of that pure, peaceful happiness, which springs from the consciousness of the favour of God, of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, of the love of Christ Jesus, and of the esteem and approbation of all pure and holy beings. If any of the baptized children of the church into whose hands this little volume may fall, are in danger of being led away into scenes of dissipation and frivolity, where all thought of religion and religious things will be swept away by the tide of sensuality and sinful indulgence, let them first read this little biography of Mary Kerr, and then ask themselves the question, is not the pure, calm, peaceful happiness of such a life as this, spent under the sunlight of God's smile, with the daily whispers of an approving conscience, in the goodly fellowship of the church of God and in the assured hope of everlasting life, worth more than all they

can ever hope to gain by a life of sinful pleasure in conformity to the spirit of the world. It is with the hope that the example of this young servant of God may be blessed in deciding many others to choose the same path of wisdom, that these lines are written.

Mary Clarissa, second daughter of Rev. Dr. A. H. and Mrs. Mary I. C. Kerr was born in Davidson County, Tenn., near "The Hermitage," on the 20th day of December 1847, and was baptized, when only a few months of age, in the First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tenn., by Rev. John T. Edgar, D. D., then the beloved pastor of that church.

Of the early childhood of Mary we shall have comparatively little to say; partly because it would require us to repeat much that has already been said in reference to Hart and Sallie, but chiefly because we desire to direct the attention of our readers particularly to that portion of her life which was spent after she became a professor of the religion of Christ.

We may say, however, that she was naturally a child of great vivacity and joyousness of

spirit. Her temperament was by nature ardent and hopeful, and until the weight of successive afflictions had overshadowed her young life, and tinged her nature with sadness she was as joyous and light-hearted a child as was ever known. The first of these afflictions came upon her when only about four years of age, in the death of a maiden aunt, Miss Maria Randolph Kerr, her father's youngest sister, to whom she was very tenderly attached. This was soon followed by a second and still severer blow in the death of her oldest, and at that time only sister, two years elder than herself. Then only a month later came the death of her only brother, an infant only a few months of age. And again, within a few months, her beloved and fond grandmother, Mrs. Sarah Ward, was taken away. Thus, in a very brief space of time, affliction after affliction came until she was left to nestle all alone upon the aching bosoms of her stricken and sorrowing parents. Child as she was, she felt deeply and permanently the influence of these bereavements. The bouyancy and joyousness of her spirit

gave place to a calm, sedate, thoughtful demeanour, which seemed remarkable in one so young.

Her religious impressions date from this early period. To soothe and comfort her under a sense of her loneliness, and especially in her sorrow for the loss of the dear little sister who had been her playmate and companion, her parents were accustomed to read a great deal to her from the word of God, and to spend much time in directing her mind to such thoughts as were calculated to cheer and comfort her. They would tell her of the death of Jesus, of His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension to heaven; they would explain to her that the departed saints were only sleeping in the ground; that their spirits were now in heaven with Jesus; that bye-and-bye He would awaken their sleeping dust to a glorious resurrection; that good parents and children would all be ultimately re-united in unbroken families in heaven. Then the conversation would turn upon the dear ones who were departed; their names and memories would be re-

called; the circumstances of their death, the state of present felicity into which it is hoped they have entered, and the coming joy when God through His great mercy should bring all the family together in His heavenly kingdom. In this way not only was much of the gloom lifted from her young spirit, but her thoughts were turned into distinctly religious channels, and she acquired a love of those great Scripture truths which lie at the foundation of our faith.

Her religious history unquestionably dates back to this early period. During this time of affliction she received impressions which were never obliterated either by the lapse of time or by youthful associations and pleasures. Her father records of her that often during this early period of her life, her voice could be heard, under the shade of the trees in the grove, or in the silence of her chamber, singing the precious hymns which she had heard from her sister; often accompanying them by audible prayers in her simple language for a new heart, and for preparation for the kingdom

of heaven. And this interest in religious things manifested itself more and more, as she grew older, in her fondness for the word of God, her love of devotional hymns, her manifest enjoyment of the services of the sanctuary, and her scrupulousness in the performance of her own private religious duties. The anxiety of her parents for her salvation, and their solicitude to see her among the number of the true followers of Christ became greater and greater every day.

At length, when she was not quite thirteen years of age, her father appointed a communion season, hoping that during its solemn services she might be led by the Holy Spirit to give her heart to the Saviour. The services were protracted through ten or twelve days, and although the pastor had no one to assist him, he continued to preach day and night, seeing the interest manifested, especially by the youth of the congregation.

Mary was perhaps the very first of the hearers who gave evidence of deep conviction, and although she exhibited no great excitement or

emotion, her heart seemed as if it would break under the dreadful sense of her guilt and sinfulness. And yet, although cast down into the very depths of despair, her heart seemed to be made of adamant. It refused to accept of Christ as a Saviour. It turned away from the one only source of relief, and the burden seemed as if it would indeed crush her to the earth. For several days this was her melancholy condition. She gave up every other employment, abandoned every other pursuit, that she might devote her whole time to seeking her soul's salvation. When not at church she was in her closet, upon her knees, with her Bible before her, or sitting weeping upon her chair, whilst her father in vain sought to direct her to the only true source of relief.

At length, however, in God's great mercy the relief came. It was during the exercises of family prayer. The father had been pouring out his heart in prayer before God, that He would remove the darkness from the mind of his dear child; that He would take away the heart of stone and give her a new heart, that

she might know the preciousness of the Redeemer, and trust Him with all her heart. When the prayer was ended, and the family arose from their knees, Mary rushed to her father, and throwing her arms around his neck, exclaimed with the deepest emotion, "Oh, Pa! Pa! Pa! I have found Jesus. Oh, Ma, Ma, I have found the Saviour," then, turning to her brother Hart, who was then only six years of age, she said "O, my dear brother, I have found a precious Saviour; give Him your little heart. I know He loves little children. My heart is full of His love." Then turning to her father, she said, "Pa, let me go and tell uncle John and aunt Susan, and my cousins, (Dr. John K. Kerr and his family,) what a precious Saviour I have found;" and though it was then between ten and eleven o'clock at night, she bounded away, to tell her friends and kindred "what great things the Lord hath done for her."

In the household of her uncle, whom she had gone to see, were three daughters, her cousins, whom she tenderly loved, and who like herself,

had been deeply convicted and were struggling with the fearful darkness of their unregenerate natures. About midnight, while the father of Mary was rejoicing over the conversion of his own child, and earnestly wrestling in prayer for the salvation of the dear children of his brother, he heard footsteps at his door, and in a moment Mary returned bringing one of her cousins with her, saying, "Oh, Pa, here is cousin B. She has found the Saviour too." In about half an hour, while these young spirits were mingling their rejoicings, and uttering the praises of their Redeemer, another, and finally the third cousin came to tell the same wonderful story of God's great mercy and grace.

How does such a scene as this transcend the power of human language to describe! What an illustration does it give of the power of prayer, and of God's great grace and mercy in fulfilling His covenant, and keeping his promises to them who put their trust in Him.

On the following Sabbath, the 29th of September 1860, Mary, together with a number of

others, was, upon public profession of her faith in Christ, received by the session into the full communion of the visible church of Christ. The occasion was one peculiarly solemn and affecting, rendered so not only by the fact that a father was officiating in the reception of his own child into the communion of saints, but by the view of the faithfulness of God to His covenant, which it afforded the pastor the opportunity of presenting. Reviewing the history of God's mercy to those in the assembly who were related to him by blood, he said:

"In common with those who are of my own kindred here, I trace my lineage through successive generations to two brothers who lived and died in Scotland many years ago. They were men eminent for their piety and for their devotion to the Presbyterian Church. They were men who revered and honoured God's covenant, to whom the seal of that covenant in baptism was a precious, priceless ordinance, and who were accustomed to train their children, as those who had been dedicated to God from their childhood, and by covenant right were

His. When I recall to mind my venerable grandfather, who, if he were now living would be nearly an hundred and fifty years of age; when I revert to the memory of my sainted father, whom I revere most of all because he was a faithful and successful minister of Jesus Christ: when I reflect upon the fact that while I am of God's great grace permitted to stand here to-day as a minister of the gospel of Christ, my only surviving brothers are Ruling Elders in the house of God; that those of my brothers and sisters who have gone down to the grave, have fallen asleep in Jesus, and that my only surviving sister is safely within the visible fold of the Great Shepherd, how can I ever sufficiently extol God's great mercy in His faithfulness to His covenants with my fathers.

"And then when I look around me on this scene at the communion table to-day, and remember that four of the dear children who sit down at the Lord's table for the first time are the grandchildren of my father: that at this same board sits, as a member of this church, one of his great-granddaughters, and that just

there (pointing to a little child seated in the midst of the Assembly), sits his great-great-grandson, upon whose face I myself have been honoured in putting the seal of God's covenant; when I look forward with assured confidence to the time when he too, in common with so many others, shall be made a happy participant of God's covenanted mercy and grace, is it any wonder that my eyes overflow with tears of joy, and my heart is full of thanksgiving and praise to Him who hath remembered His covenant, and hath established His faithfulness in the very heavens? And oh, my friends, you who are still without the pale of God's church and covenant; you who have never dedicated to Him either yourselves or your children; who have never had impressed, either upon you or upon them, the seal of this holy covenant between God and men, is there not something in all this to encourage you to come to Him this day, to enter into covenant with Him, that these blessings may be your inheritance and the inheritance of your children?"

Our young readers now see Mary brought

by profession of her faith within the communion of the church of Christ, a young disciple, only thirteen years of age, surrounded on every hand by temptations, with many conflicts to be endured, and many crosses to be borne, but with a spirit humble, earnest, resolute and courageous, resting peacefully and joyously in the promises of God, and in the assurance that her strength will be equal to her day. Let us now trace for them the characteristics which distinguished her as a professor of the religion of Jesus Christ.

And the first of these which impresses itself upon us as we read the memoranda which have been placed in our hands, is her conscientious faithfulness to the secret duties of religion. No professing Christian can hope to make progress in the divine life without paying strict and constant attention to the duties of the closet. With how many professed followers of Christ, especially among the young, does the first decline in the religious life begin in the neglect of secret prayer! It was not so with Mary. She had stated hours for secret com-

munion with God, and with these no company or companionship was permitted to interfere. Night and morning she read God's holy word, poring over its pages as the chart which God had given to guide her to a brighter world. Upon her knees in secret prayer she sought and obtained daily such supplies of grace as she needed to keep her from temptation, and this was one secret of a religious life which was not only consistent and blameless, but was also elevated and sanctified beyond most of her age.

Another characteristic of Mary as a christian was her great love for the word of God, and her delight in studying the doctrines and truths which it contains. She was not content, as so many christians are, with merely reading a chapter every morning and evening for devotional purposes. From very early childhood she was accustomed to spend much of the day in reading those parts of it which were most interesting to her, such as its histories, biographies, &c. When she became older, it was still her favourite book. She not only read it, but

studied it, bringing to her assistance all the helps, such as Commentaries, Bible Dictionary, &c., to which she had access. In order to fix its blessed truths in her mind, she was accustomed to write out those passages which seemed to her most striking and impressive, and in connection with them, the most important and interesting expositions from the Commentaries she was reading, accompanied, in many cases, by practical reflections of her own upon the passage.

After her conversion, it was interesting to observe to what extent, in these written exercises, intended for no eye but her own, her thoughts ran upon the great cardinal doctrines and principles of the Christian system, and with what clearness and comprehension her mind had already opened to receive them.

It was also delightful to see the deep hold which these truths were taking upon her nature, and the intense interest she felt in them, as manifested in the brief ejaculations accompanying these statements of doctrine, such as the following: "Lord, impress this truth upon

my heart," "May this principle abide with living power in my soul," &c., and in such expressions as these: "O, how beautiful," "How sublime," "How godlike," "How full of grace and love," &c., &c.

Mary was also a dear lover of the public ordinances of God's house. She could truly say with the Psalmist, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord," She never manifested any reluctance to attend the services of the sanctuary. On the contrary, she seemed to feel that the public services of God's house were essential to her spiritual life. Neither the inclemency of the weather, nor the bad condition of the roads, could keep her away from the church on Sabbath. Not even her own health, unless she was actually prostrated by disease, was permitted to interfere. On every Sabbath, and at every service she was present, not a listless, indifferent hearer, but an attentive, thoughtful, devout worshipper, participating earnestly and prayerfully in the services. On her return to her home, she was accustomed to make a note

in her memorandum-book of the text, and to write down for future reference the leading points of the sermon, and such thoughts as had interested her most, together with a statement of her own impressions and feelings under the power of the truth.

It is to be regretted that some samples of these notes cannot be furnished for our young readers, but they were written only for her own use, and on her death-bed she requested that they should all be destroyed, and her wishes were strictly complied with after her death. A clue to the character of these notes may, however, be had in the following extract from a letter written to an aged and beloved relative only about two weeks before her death:

"Papa preached on last Sabbath morning from the text, 'For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.' It was very manifest to me that the subject had been suggested to him by permitting his thoughts to go out after my dear brother in his exalted and glorified state. It was a day of fat things to my soul. After

speaking of the preciousness of the idea of a resurrection, and showing that it was, in the true Scripture sense of it, essentially a God-idea, in distinction from everything man could conceive of on such a subject, he gave a condensed, terse, running argument, demonstrating and vindicating the stupendous truth. He then stated that his main object in the selection of his subject was to speak of the *necessity* for the change spoken of in the text, and what was implied in that change. I cannot, in the brief space left me, give you an adequate conception of the glorious ideas brought to view. It must suffice to tell you that death seemed to me divested of all its terrors, and I could see how indeed the day of one's death may be far better than the day of one's birth."

Who can read such expressions without feeling how great was the wisdom and grace it had pleased our Heavenly Father to bestow upon this youthful disciple, and how rapidly, under the discipline of His Providence and under the operation of His Holy Spirit, He was preparing her for the change which was so soon to come.

Another characteristic of Mary as a professor of the religion of Jesus is found in her intelligent and ardent attachment to the church of her fathers.

It is not enough, as we have already intimated, to say of her that she was a consistent member of the church, yielding strict obedience to its laws, and abstaining from everything which could be regarded as a violation of its rules and obligations. Her instinctive sense of right, and her consciousness of the binding force of vows solemnly taken, would have kept her free from all censure, in any pure and elevated association into which she might have entered. Her's was not one of those natures which could take solemn vows at the communion table, and then go out into society and wantonly trample upon them. From the day when she first gave herself in solemn covenant to God in the presence of His people, until the day of her death, no reproach rested upon her character as a follower of Christ. Surrounded by temptations, in the midst of worldly-minded companions, with every avenue to fashionable

dissipation open to her, and the pecuniary means to gratify her every wish, she maintained the integrity of her christian character, the purity of her christian life, and the sanctity of her religious vows.

But beyond all this, there was a devoted love to the church which kept her from feeling that there was any great cross in the observance of its rules. One of her favourite songs of praise, one that her voice would often be heard singing in the stillness of the night, and in the retirement of her chamber, was Dr. Dwight's version of the 137th Psalm, beginning:

> "I love Thy kingdom, Lord,
> The house of Thine abode;
> The church our blest Redeemer saved
> With His own precious blood."

And while she loved all who profess the name of Jesus, to whatever denomination they belonged; and rejoiced in the welfare of every church in which the pure gospel of Christ is preached, she was especially and ardently devoted to the Presbyterian church. Her's was not, however, that blind and unthinking alle-

giance to a church which we sometimes see in those who know nothing of the doctrines for which they contend, and who, in their bigotry, are ready to unchurch others, while they know nothing of the foundations upon which their own church rests. Her's was an intelligent attachment, the result of a careful and prayerful examination of the doctrines and polity, the faith and order of the Presbyterian church.

She had much indeed that might have led to such a blind and unintelligent acceptance of Presbyterian doctrine and discipline. As we have already said, her ancestors, from the very days of the Covenanters in Scotland, had all been Presbyterians, and every generation had been marked by men who stood high as ministers and ruling elders in the Presbyterian church. The daughter of a Presbyterian minister, having all her early associations connected with that church, it was natural that she should love it, and have a partiality for it, and become attached to its sublime teachings and simple solemn rites of worship. But her convictions rested upon a much deeper and

broader basis than this. Dr. Kerr, in his intercourse with his children, was accustomed to guard them against everything like dogmatism in any department of truth, and especially in that of religious inquiry. He taught them never to be governed even by his most thoroughly matured and sacredly cherished opinions, unless the reasons upon which these opinions were based appeared to them just and satisfactory. They were taught that their faculties were given to them of God for the very purpose of thinking, and judging, and forming conclusions upon all these subjects, and that they would be held responsible to Him for any failure on their part to aim at unprejudiced and unbiassed truth. And while, therefore, in the double attitude of parent and pastor, he sought to instill into their minds the great truths that were drawn from the word of God, he urged them to bring every doctrine to the touchstone of Scripture, to try it by "the law and the testimony," and not to be contented until their faith rested upon higher and

more impregnable evidence than the testimony of man.

The result of this course was three-fold. First, it rendered them happy in their opinions and views. When they embraced them, they embraced them cordially, as the result of their own investigations, and of the highest exercise of their enlightened reasons. Second, it made them firm and decided in their views upon every subject. They were always ready to give a reason for the hope that was in them, with meekness and with reverence. They held their opinions by no uncertain tenure, and they were guarded by thorough investigation against the insidious wiles of assaulting errorists. Third, they were guarded against all mere bigotry and intolerance. The study of different subjects, with the arguments on the one side and on the other, taught them the great lesson of the fallibility of the human understanding, and the possibility of great diversity of views on the part of good and wise men on the same subject. They learned that great divergence of doctrine upon minor and non-essential points,

was not at all incompatible with the life and power of religion in the soul, and that, therefore, all uncharitableness toward fellow-christians was to be avoided, not only as unworthy of the true spirit of christianity, but as unworthy of an enlightened mind. While, therefore, Mary was a decided Presbyterian, because from investigation she was thoroughly convinced that Presbyterianism, both in its doctrine and in its discipline, has the high sanction and authority of God's holy word, she was far removed from everything like bigotry or censoriousness toward other christians. Satisfied with "the goodness of the Lord's house, even of His holy temple," the language of her heart was, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces; for my brethren and companions' sake I will now say, Peace be within thee."

Another characteristic of the religious life of this dear girl was the happy influence which religion exerted over her private and domestic life. It is within the retirement and privacy of the domestic circle that religion exerts its gen-

tlest and most hallowed power. Its graces are not so much like diamonds, that are fitted best to flash out their light in the pomp and pageantry of the court, or amidst the splendours of the festive hall, as they are like pure and modest pearls, whose chaste beauty fascinates the eye more and more as we quietly gaze upon them. A religion, therefore, whose power is not felt in the family circle, which does not give its refining and sanctifying influence to the ties that bind the inmates of the home together, so as to make them more gentle, more loving, more forbearing, and more self-sacrificing toward one another, gives the very highest proof of its spuriousness and insincerity.

In this aspect of a religious life, it is exceedingly interesting to read the many testimonials that have been given us as to the domestic life of Mary Kerr. We can only insert a few as illustrative of the blessed mission which for years she fulfilled in a household over which her removal cast a shadow whose lingering traces remain until this hour.

Between Mary and her parents there existed

relations of the tenderest intimacy and most endearing companionship. She entertained for them the profoundest reverence, and at the same time the deepest love; so that, though their daily intercourse was of the most free and confiding character, there was never a word or act of her life toward them that savoured of impropriety, or of undue familiarity. Her bearing toward them was always that of an affectionate and dutiful child. To her mother, especially, her devotion was truly wonderful. In those seasons of affliction which came one after another over the household, when the spirit of the mother was crushed and bleeding under the loss of dearly loved children, Mary seemed to feel that it was her special mission to soothe and cheer her mother's heart. Now lingering silently by her side, with her arm tenderly thrown about her neck; now whispering in her ear some simple words of love or comfort; now taking her Bible, and reading from it such passages as were richest in tender consolation; now singing some hymn expressive of the confidence and hope of the children of God; in

every way indeed that her loving nature could devise, she sought to administer the balm of heavenly consolation to her mother's sorrowing heart.

On one of these occasions, soon after the death of Hart, seeing her father sitting with his head bowed down, and tears streaming from his eyes, she came to him, and putting her hands upon his forehead, said tenderly:

"Pa, how much happier do you think brother is than he would be if he were here with us?"

The father, looking up into her face, said:

"Human arithmetic cannot solve that problem, my child. This only I know, that he is as happy as the exceeding and eternal weight of God's glory can make him."

"Then, Pa," said she, "ought we not to hold up our heads, and wipe away our tears."

"I do not weep," said the father, "as those who have no hope, but I miss my dear boy so much that the tears come unbidden."

"Yes, Pa," said she, "I miss him, too, more than words can tell, but then I feel so happy,

and so thankful, to know that he is safe in heaven."

Then turning, and passing into an adjoining room, she sung, so as to be heard by her father, these two stanzas of an old familiar hymn:

"When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to every fear
And wipe my weeping eyes.

"When I've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
I've no less days to sing God's praise,
Than when I first begun."

Could anything have been more considerate or thoughtful; more expressive of the gentleness and tenderness of a loving nature; or more in accordance with the spirit of Him whose mission it is to "appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness?"

Her brother and sisters, all of whom were younger than herself, were the objects at once of her tender solicitude and overflowing love. All her skill and taste were expended upon

their persons, not in providing for them extravagant dress, and foolish and costly adornment, but in arranging their dress with a view to neatness and gentility of appearance. She embraced every opportunity to cultivate and improve their tastes and manners in society, teaching them to be always gentle, courteous and kind to those of their own age; to avoid all harshness or rudeness in their intercourse with one another; to cherish due respect and veneration for the aged; to bear themselves with becoming gravity and solemnity in the house of God; and to strive to commend themselves by gentleness, docility and true manliness of spirit to all with whom they were thrown into companionship.

When any of the younger members of the family were sick, Mary was always by their bedside, a patient, loving, unwearying nurse. When Hart was seized with the fearful epidemic that took his life, she instantly repaired to his bedside, and through the long dreary hours of that night, in which the cholera was doing its fearful work, she could not be prevailed upon,

even for a moment, to leave his bed-side. The physicians told her of the imminent peril to her own life if she remained. Her father, in his agony of spirit, entreated her not to endanger the life that was so dear to him; but love held her by the bed-side, and without the slightest appearance of trepidation or alarm, she continued her tender and thoughtful ministry until the spirit had taken its flight.

That which most deeply interested her in reference to her brother and sisters was their religious welfare; and it is interesting to see in how many ways she sought to commend to them the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to impress their minds with religious things.

Now she would propose to them a walk through the grove, and make every leaf and forest flower the means of leading their thoughts naturally and pleasantly upward to divine and heavenly things: now she would entertain them with simple but touching narratives from Scripture, told in her own impressive and forcible way. At one time it would

be the story of Joseph; at another that of Moses; at another the life of Samuel, or the stoning of Stephen, or the great meeting which Peter held in the house of Cornelius, when the gospel was first preached to the Gentiles, and when multitudes of heathen were converted to Christ. Then she would take as her theme the life of Jesus, His death, resurrection and ascension, the glory which He now has with the Father, His love of little children, His guardian care over them, and the beautiful home He has prepared for them.

At another time, she would have some interesting narrative from history for them. She would tell them of the zeal and labours and sufferings of Martin Luther, or Calvin, or Knox, or Latimer, or Rogers, or some one of the old Reformers, grouping the facts of their history together in such a way as to present a vivid picture to the minds of her hearers; and often they would sit for an hour listening to these stories of eminent servants of God, who "were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection;" who

"had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments;" who "wandered in deserts and in mountains, in dens and in caves of the earth;" who were slain with the sword, and were burned at the stake, all for the testimony of Jesus. And while their young hearts glowed with the fire of enthusiasm, kindled by these recitals, she would seek to impress upon them some important principle or practical truth, which she deduced from the narrative to which they had listened.

At another time, she would engage them for an hour at a time at the piano, where she would lead them in singing, with the accompaniment of the instrument, the most select and precious hymns with which they were familiar, such as those beginning, "Jesus, lover of my soul," "I love thy kingdom, Lord," "Come, humble sinner, in whose breast," "How did my heart rejoice to hear," "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord," "Alas! and did my Saviour bleed," &c., &c.

To the children, these exercises were delightful. They were always glad for the time to come when Sister Mary was ready to converse with them; and whether she proposed to them a walk in the grove, or a seat upon the door-step, or a place at the piano, their gladness could be seen in their faces.

The last thing which characterized Mary as a christian to which we shall call the attention of our readers, was her fearlessness of death. How many of God's children are all their life long "through fear of death subject to bondage." How many there are who, while they give every other evidence of piety, are in continual trepidation, lest when the time comes for the last great fearful conflict, they will be unprepared to meet it. Such was not the case with Mary Kerr. We have seen the calmness with which she sat in the pestilential air of her brother's dying chamber, exposing her life without the slightest appearance of fear. This was not merely the result of excitement, overawing and banishing all thought of personal peril. She was often heard to say, when in perfect

calmness of spirit and buoyancy of health, that she had not the slightest fear of death, that she "knew whom she had believed, and was persuaded that He was able to keep that which she had committed unto Him against that day." And while this is true of her uniform christian experience, it is also true that there were times when she seemed with peculiar distinctness to "read her title clear to mansions in the sky." There were times when to her spiritual vision it was given to see "Salem's golden spires" rising in glorious prospect before her, times when like Bunyan's pilgrim she stood upon the Delectable Mountains, and through the glass of faith looked over upon the domes and battlements of the celestial city.

Only a day or two before her last illness, she wrote to a friend and relative as follows: "We have the cholera on our place, and several of the servants have died. I feel much uneasiness about the family, and especially about Papa. He is greatly exposed. He is constantly among the sick and the dying, and apparently without the slighest concern for himself. In regard to

myself, I think I can safely say, 'I know in whom I have trusted;' and if it should please God to call me suddenly away by this fearful pestilence, I trust I shall not be afraid to go."

A few days afterwards a kind and tender response to this letter came; it was opened and read by Mary's parents; the call of her Heavenly Father had already come, and the "fearful pestilence" of which she speaks, had been the swift-winged messenger to convey her to Himself. The manner in which she met the summons was such as we might anticipate from what has been already written. As intimated in her letter, the cholera had been raging for some time on the plantation of her father among the servants. Eleven persons connected with the plantation had already died. At length Mary was seized with symptoms of the same terrible malady, and although everything was done for her that medical skill could suggest, or that loving hands could effect, she fell asleep in Jesus on the evening of the 14th of August, 1867.

When the announcement was made to her of

the near approach of the last enemy, she received the tidings, not only with perfect composure, but even with an expression of joy. Her face lighted up with a smile as she said: "All is well! I am happy! Sweet heaven You don't know how I love to say, Sweet heaven." Then she asked those around her to sing "Rock of Ages," "Jesus my all to heaven is gone," and other favourite hymns. At intervals she exclaimed several times, "Glory! glory to God! Glory to God my Saviour!" "I am happy, oh how happy!" Meanwhile she was busy exhorting those around her to meet her in heaven, and sending similar messages to the absent ones; and in this state of unclouded peace and rapturous triumph continued until her voice became too weak for utterance, and her eyes gently closed in the sleep of death.

Who can read the record of such a life, crowned with a death so triumphantly glorious, and not feel that indeed "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." As we look back over the pure and unsullied life of this lovely, beautiful, accomplished girl, we feel that in-

deed "a good name is better than precious ointment;" and as we look forward beyond this present life, a voice from heaven falls softly on our ear, saying, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth! Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours and their works do follow them!"

AN APPEAL

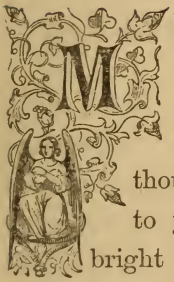
TO THE

BAPTIZED CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH.

"Ye are THE CHILDREN of the Prophets, and OF THE COVENANT which God made with our Fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy Seed shall all the kindreds of the Earth be blessed. UNTO YOU FIRST, God having raised up His Son Jesus, SENT HIM TO BLESS YOU, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."—*Acts* iii. 25, 26.

TO THE BAPTIZED

Children of the Church.



My Dear Young Friends—These pages have been written especially for you. The writer, who loves little children, has thought that it would be pleasant to you to read the lives of these bright and interesting children, who were taken away from this world by death in their early youth, and who are now, as we confidently trust, among the number of the redeemed ones in glory. He has hoped too that, while you are reading these little sketches, and after you have laid them down, the Holy Spirit may incline your hearts to love the same Saviour whom these sainted children loved, to seek the same experience of His love which they had, and to be prepared by His grace for the same bright world to which they have gone.

You have now read the story of their lives and deaths. You have looked upon the images of their young and pleasant faces. I do not feel that you are any longer strangers to me. Though I have never seen you, and may never see you in this world, I hope we are all going to that better land where we shall see each other, and know each other.

And now I would like for a little while just to imagine that I have you gathered around me, as the children of my own Sabbath school are accustomed to gather around me when we have our "children's meetings" on Sabbath afternoon. I would like to feel that you are looking up to me with your bright, sunny faces, ready to listen to all that I have to say.

"What is it then that I wish to say to you?" Many things; and first of all: *How very thankful you should be that you are among the number of the* CHILDREN OF THE COVENANT. Do you ever think how different your circumstances would have been, if you had been born, as so many children are, of heathen parents, in a pagan land, where there are no Bibles or

Sabbath Schools, or Christian sanctuaries; where the name of Jesus is never heard, and the children are taught to worship idols of wood and stone, instead of worshipping the true God? Do you ever think how different your condition would be if your parents were, like many others that you know, irreligious and wicked, who never send their children to the Sabbath school, or teach them to pray and read God's Holy Word, but suffer them to spend the Sabbath in wandering about the streets, and to learn from ungodly men to take God's sacred name in vain? Oh! my young friends, you can never be thankful enough for the priceless blessing of pious Christian parents.

You should be thankful too that when your parents were converted to God, they chose for their church one which recognizes the covenant of God with His people as extending also to their children, so that little children like yourselves are entitled to membership in the church. Many churches around you do not admit that little children have any interest in the covenant of God with His people. Therefore they will

not administer baptism, which is the outward seal of the covenant, to little children. Although our Saviour expressly says: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," and although the apostles, whenever they baptized a believer who was the head of a household, always baptized his household with him, these churches will not baptize little children, and teach that, until they are old enough to enter into covenant for themselves with God, they have no interest in His covenanted promises.

Now it is one of your great blessings that your parents do recognize this covenant relation. In token of their faith in it, when you were yet a little child, they took you to the house of God, and there had the seal of the covenant applied to you publicly, in presence of the whole congregation. When you were baptized, this covenant of God with His people was solemnly ratified by your parents, and it is now your privilege to consider yourself, in a peculiar sense, one of the lambs of the Saviour's

fold. His name is now upon your forehead. Your parents have solemnly dedicated you to Him. He has been pleased, according to His gracious promise, to receive you under His special guardianship and care. You are now for your parents' sake, and for His covenant's sake, one of the objects of His most tender interest and regard. However wayward you may be; however forgetful of Him and of your duty to Him, the Great Shepherd does not forget you. He thinks of you as one of those given to Him in childhood, and He tenderly yearns over you, and longs for your return to His fold.

This is what Peter meant, when, on the day of Pentecost, he addressed the Jews, who were, like you, THE CHILDREN OF THE COVENANT, and had, like you, received the seal of the covenant in infancy, and said to them, "Unto you *first*"—as those in whom He felt the deepest interest, for whom He had the most anxious solicitude —"Unto you *first*, God, having raised up His son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Is

it not a precious thought to you that, as one of the baptized children of the church, you are the Saviour's special care—that He feels in you a deeper interest than in those whose parents have never thus dedicated them to God, and claimed the promises of His covenant concerning them?

As I am writing now for children, and not for grown persons, I may claim the privilege, which I always use in speaking to children, of alluding to incidents connected with my boyhood as illustrations of what I wish to say. One of these will help you to understand what I mean, when I say that your relation to the Saviour is a more precious one than that of other children who have never been baptized.

Once, when a little fatherless boy, I was sent away from home by my mother, to attend a school in a distant village. Not far from the village lived a very wealthy gentleman, who was kind to all the children of the school, but did not seem to feel any special interest in them. When he learned that my mother had placed me there, he sent for me to come to his

house, and after showing me many marks of kindness, when I went to leave his house, and return to the village, he took both of my hands in his, and said, "My boy, your father and I were intimate friends for many years before his death. We had a mutual agreement, that if either of us needed any assistance, in money or in anything else, the other would be always ready to render it. Your father is no longer here, but I feel that he still lives in his son. The obligation is still upon me, and now I wish you to feel that, for your father's sake, I have a special interest in you, and you have a tender claim upon me. If you want anything at any time, remember my covenant with your father. Only let me know what you want, and I will be always ready to help you."

Now, do you not see how different my relations to this covenanted friend of my father were from those of other boys around me, how much more interest he had in me, and with how much more freedom I could go to him, and ask him for anything that I might want. Just so is it with this covenant between God and

your parents, dear child of the church. He has a special interest in you for your parents' sake. He admits you to a special place in His compassionate regard, because of the covenant between your parents and Himself. You may therefore feel that you are nearer to Him; you may go to Him with more freedom in prayer. You have special promises that you can plead. Like the Psalmist, you can not only say, "Oh, Lord, truly I am thy servant;" but you can also say, "I am thy servant, and the son of thine hand-maid." You can not only plead the promises that are made to those who penitently turn to God, but you can plead the promises that are made to the children, and to the children's children, of "such as love Him and keep His commandments."

Do not fail, then, to be thankful that you were dedicated to God in infancy by baptism; that the seal of the covenant was placed upon you, and that you are now one of the baptized children of the church. Whenever you think of the fact that you are a baptized child of the church, let it encourage in you such thoughts

as these: "The Lord Jesus feels a special interest in me. He loves me as one of the lambs of His fold. He seeks my love in return. Blessed Jesus! teach me to love Thee. Reclaim me from all my wanderings. Let me abide forever under thy gentle control—one of the sheep of thy pasture—one of the people of thy care."

A second thought which I wish to urge upon you, dear children, is that IT IS A VERY SIMPLE THING TO BE A CHRISTIAN—SO simple that the little child need not wait to grow older to become one. We have seen that little Sallie Kerr gave every evidence of being truly converted when only six or seven years of age. Now, my young readers must not suppose that Sallie was so different by nature from other children, that what was possible for her would be impossible for them. She had the same infirmities and temptations with other children. There was in her by nature the "same evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." She had, therefore, the same difficulties that you have to overcome. And yet, at an age

earlier than that to which most of you have attained, she was already a christian, rejoicing in the hope of pardon and acceptance through Christ. Do you ask me why this was? My dear young friends, it was simply because she had been brought to feel how sinful her heart was, and how much she needed to be pardoned and cleansed by the blessed Saviour, to put her trust in Him, and look to Him to make her holy, and prepare her for heaven. Feeling that she could never be good, or go to heaven of herself, she asked Jesus to take her as one of His redeemed children; and having His promise that "whosoever asketh receiveth," she trusted in Him, and was happy in the assurance that He would save the soul which she had committed to Him. Cannot you also do this? To be a christian is only to turn with all your heart to Jesus as the great Saviour, and trust in Him for pardon and grace, and all that you need. It is just to put your hand in His, and let Him lead you and support you and help you until He brings you safely to His home above.

Let me tell you another little story of my boyhood to illustrate this. Shortly after the incident to which I have already alluded, I was taken away from the village school, and sent to a school in the country near my home. This school was taught by a lady, and all the scholars were girls, except myself, and one little boy, scarcely large enough to go to school. I was sent more as a protector for my sisters, who were younger than myself, than for any other reason; for the walk to the school-house was a very long one, and a part of it very gloomy and difficult, and they needed some one older than themselves to assist them, and keep them from being afraid.

At one point, not far from the school-house, was a little stream which most of the scholars had to cross, and which was often greatly swollen by sudden rains. At these times the foot-logs would be all covered, and we would have to go further up the stream to a point where the banks were higher, and where a log had been thrown across the stream that the water could not overflow. This log, though,

was not hewn, nor provided with railings, like the foot-log, on the road; and as it was small, and the surface of it slippery from the recent rains, it was a very difficult matter for the children to walk over on it. The water rushing swiftly under it made the unsteady footing seem still more treacherous, and there was only one way in which the crossing could be safely made. Being the only boy in the crowd, and feeling that it devolved on me to provide for the safe crossing of all the girls, I was accustomed to roll up my pants, and taking a firm staff in one hand, wade out into the water by the side of the log and hold on to the hands of the girls, and support and steady them as they walked along. As I had frequently to play ferryman in this way, there was one thing which made a peculiar impression upon me. I always noticed that the *younger* the children were, the *less* difficulty I had in persuading them to cross over with my help. The little ones, whose hearts had been full of dismay when they first looked at the treacherous crossing and the rushing waters, so soon

as I had taken my place in the stream, and held forth my hand to them, telling them not to be afraid, for I would hold them, and not let them fall, would come at once, saying: "I'm not afraid; you won't let me fall, will you?" and would soon be on the other side, all safe and happy. The older ones would hesitate for a long time, and come at last with great trepidation, and sometimes it would be necessary to take hold of their hands violently, and almost force them to make the crossing.

I have often thought since of this little stream, with its narrow and difficult crossing. Between us and our home in heaven lies the deep and turbid stream of sin and temptation. We have no means of crossing it ourselves, but Jesus has thrown over it the bridge of His redemption. We must walk upon this crossing, or we can never enter heaven. We must have the righteousness of Jesus, His atonement, His obedience, His Spirit. All these He offers to us freely, and yet, if we were left to ourselves, we would be like the children at the crossing. We would be thinking of the greatness of our

sin, the power of temptation, the weakness of our hearts, and we would have no courage to venture upon the mercy and grace of God in Christ. But Jesus has not left us thus to ourselves. Having completed His work of salvation, He is still in spirit present with us. He stands, so to speak, in the midst of the turbid waters of our guilt and sin. He holds out His hand to us. He says to us, "Be not afraid, only believe; only trust in me, I will not let you perish; I will save you." Dear children, what an easy thing it is just to put your hand, as it were, into the hand of Jesus; just to say: "Precious Saviour, I give myself to Thee, for Thou wilt save me."

Do you feel a desire to love and serve this precious Saviour, and to trust in Him for salvation? Then go to Him at once in prayer, and give your heart to Him. Remember the words of the beautiful hymn which you often sing in the Sabbath-school,

> "I'm but a child, a little child,
> Yet Jesus died for me,
> And through His blood, His precious blood
> I shall from sin be free."

Do not think for a moment of waiting until you are older. Remember what I told you about the children at the crossing—how the little ones seemed to have so much less trouble than those that were older. It is just so with the decision of this great question of salvation. It will never be easier than it is now for you to become a christian. On the contrary, all the difficulties will increase as you grow older. When we have a revival of religion in one of our churches, every pastor knows how much more readily the young are induced to give up their hearts to the Saviour than those of maturer age. When the Holy Spirit begins to move upon the hearts of the very young, they are soon persuaded, and enabled by Him to embrace Jesus Christ as He is freely offered to them in the gospel. Their hearts soon experience the fulfilment of the precious promise: "They that seek Me early shall find Me." They are soon rejoicing in the love of the blessed Saviour, and the hope of salvation through Him, while older persons, awakened to deep conviction of their sinfulness, find their minds

and hearts full of doubt and perplexity, and often go for months, and even years, bowed down under a weight of anxiety and despondency, before they can be brought to exercise a simple childlike faith in Christ.

Have you ever noticed, my young friends, how few persons are converted after they attain to manhood and womanhood; how few old persons become christians, and unite with the church? Have you ever thought in how many cases the Holy Spirit, who had moved upon their hearts in childhood, as He is now moving upon yours, after they had long refused to give their hearts to Jesus, became wearied and grieved, and ceased to move upon their hearts any more? Do you ever think that if you refuse to become christians in childhood, if you postpone this matter to some future time, He may also forsake you, and cease to invite you, and warn you to come to Christ? Oh, do not, then, for any consideration, put off until you are older the subject of religion. God requires you to come now and be saved. Jesus invites you to come now. The Holy Spirit urges you

to come now. Your conscience tells you to come now. It is only Satan that bids you wait until you grow older. You have fewer difficulties in your way now than you will have then. You have more encouragement now than you will have then. This is the most favourable moment you will ever find in which to come to Jesus.

> "Youth is the most accepted time
> To love and serve the Lord;
> A flower presented in its prime
> Will much delight afford.
>
> Give Him the morning of your days
> And be forever blest,
> 'Tis none but those in wisdom's ways
> Enjoy substantial rest."

I have one thing more which I wish to say to you, dear children, and then my task in the preparation of this little volume will be done I wish to urge upon you that you cherish AN INTELLIGENT AND DEVOTED LOVE FOR THE CHURCH OF YOUR FATHERS. (I speak now particularly to those whose parents are members of the Presbyterian Church, since it is chiefly into their hands this little volume will fall.) You have

seen the ardent attachment of Hart and Mary to the church in which they were born, their eagerness to become fully acquainted with its doctrines and principles, and their readiness at all times to vindicate the principles of Presbyterianism, whenever and by whomsoever assailed. This was not a blind or bigoted attachment, in so far as we are able to judge. It was, on the contrary, an enlightened conviction of the truth of the system which they espoused; a conviction based upon a careful study of the word of God. They read the Scriptures, and read judiciously written books, that they might know the true principles of church government, and compare the creed of their fathers with the Scriptures of Eternal truth.

Such is the attachment which I wish you to have for Presbyterianism, and for the Presbyterian Church. No one despises bigotry or sectarianism more than I do. When I hear a member of one denomination of Christians asserting that his is the only true church, and that all others are mere societies outside of the visible body of Christ, I feel a kind of pity for him,

not altogether free from contempt. I think I have the same kind of feeling that Paul had for the same class of persons in his day. For you must remember that there were high-church-men in the days of Paul as well as now. In Philippi, for instance, there was a body of men in the church who separated themselves from the rest of the brethren, and claimed to be the true church. They boasted of their regular line of succession through apostles and prophets from Abraham. As circumcision was the ordinance through which they held that the succession was *orderly transmitted*, they were accustomed to dignify themselves with the title of THE CIRCUMCISION, and all who refused to acknowledge their claims, and receive the ordinances at their hands, they called THE UNCIRCUMCISION, and refused to have fellowship with them, declaring that they were not members of the visible church of Christ, and, if saved at all, must be saved through the uncovenanted mercies of God.

Now, Paul writes a letter to the Philippian Christians, and instead of recognizing these

zealous advocates of circumcision as the true church, he sets aside their claims altogether, and recognizing those as the true Israel who worshipped God in the spirit, and put no confidence in outward ordinances, he admonishes them to beware of these high-churchmen. He does not dignify them with the title they have arrogated to themselves. He does not call them THE CIRCUMCISION, but, by way of expressing his contempt for bigotry and arrogance, he calls them THE CONCISION. "Beware of the concision," (Phil. iii. 2.)

Paul then tells us in the next verse whom we are to consider as belonging to the true church. "We are the circumcision, (that which these men claim to be,) which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." That is to be considered a part of the true church of Christ, not in which some outward ordinance is administered after a particular mode, but in which God is worshipped in spirit, Christ is held forth as He is revealed in the gospel, and no

confidence is placed in outward rites, or ceremonial observances.

It is this Scriptural view of the true church which I would have you take, so that you may be ready to recognize as your brethren in Christ, all members of evangelical churches, whether they are called Methodists or Baptists, Episcopalians or Presbyterians; whether they are Calvinists or Arminians, Lutherans or Reformed. Never be found among the number of *the concision*—those who will not recognize their brethren of other evangelical churches; who will not have fellowship with a man because he is not of their particular creed. And if at any time you hear one of your companions saying that his church is the only true church, and all others are only sects, just set him down as being one of *the concision*, and do as Paul says, beware of him: let him alone. It will do no good to argue with him. You can never reason a man out of arrogance and conceit. The more you argue with him, the more you pamper his pride, and nourish his self-conceit. The best thing you can do for him is to pity

him as one of *the concision*, and let him alone.

It is a pleasant thing to know that there are but few of this class in any branch of the church. The most of our brethren, whatever they call themselves, Methodists, Baptists or Episcopalians, while they have a proper preference for their own church, make no invidious distinctions between themselves and us, but accord to us the right to be numbered among the members of the visible body of Christ. Let me entreat you always to cultivate such a spirit of charity towards christians of other denominations as shall lead you to rejoice in their prosperity, and to say with the apostle, "Grace be upon all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

But while you cherish a kindly spirit towards all other branches of the church, and guard yourselves against all sectarianism and bigotry, cultivate always a special devotion to the church of your choice. Be decided and frank in your attachment to Presbyterianism. Let others around you see that while you cheerfully ac-

cord to them the right to think differently from you, you rejoice in the fact that you are Presbyterians. Let them see that you love the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church, that its doctrines and polity, its history and memories are all dear to your heart.

That you may do this intelligently, let me say to you that the Presbyterian Church, with which your parents are connected, is, in its essential principles, the same that has existed, not only from the days of the apostles, but from the days of Abraham until now. I say *in its essential principles*, because, in points that are not essential, it has undergone many changes since Abraham's day; but from the time when it was first planted in the family of Abraham until now, the church, in its purest form, has always been Presbyterian. That it was so before the days of Abraham, we may safely conclude from the fact that it has been so since, although we have no definite information in reference to the form of the church before the calling of Abraham. When it was distinctly set up in visible form in the household of Abra-

ham, it was a Presbyterian Church. It continued to be such under the ministry of Christ and his apostles; and after the close of the period of inspiration, the purer part of the church of Christ continued through all the darkness of the middle ages to be Presbyterian, and to-day the great majority of those churches which are Evangelical, hold essentially to the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church.

These things may seem strange to many of you, because you have never given them serious attention, and therefore I ask you to follow me attentively for a little while, that I may show you that the church of God, as it existed in the days of Abraham, and in the days of the apostles, was essentially Presbyterian.

To do this we must first determine in our minds the question, what is a Presbyterian Church? To this I answer: It is a church whose government is vested, as its name implies, in PRESBYTERIES, or *bodies of Elders.* The word *Presbyter* means Elder, and any church which is governed exclusively by a body of Presbyters, or Elders, is, in this general

sense, a Presbyterian Church. It is a church which has no Bishops or Archbishops, in the sense in which these words are now employed by prelatical churches. Its ministers are all of the same rank and authority. They bear rule jointly, and not in subordination to one another.

To complete the idea of a Presbyterian Church, however, as it was originally instituted, and as it continues to exist, it is necessary that there shall be two kinds of Presbyters, or Elders. There are first the Ministers of the Gospel, who are sometimes called Teaching Elders, because they both rule and teach, or preach the gospel. Then there are the Elders chosen from among the people, and ordained to take part with the ministers in the government of the church. These are generally called Ruling Elders. That a church shall be Presbyterian, therefore, it is necessary that it shall be governed by these two kinds of Elders—Ministering Elders, and Ruling Elders—and shall have no other rulers in it. The Deacons in the Presbyterian Church are not rulers. They

have no authority in the government of the Church. They are only appointed to take care of its temporal interests.

Not only must a Presbyterian Church be governed exclusively by Elders; it is also essential that these Elders shall rule jointly, and not singly. They must not each one govern a particular part of the church, by his own independent authority; but they must govern through church courts, in which a greater or less number of them meet together, and deliberate, and decide upon questions of government. And these church courts must be so related to each other, that a question of discipline may be carried by appeal, or complaint, from a lower court to a higher one, representing a larger number of congregations, so that every part of the church shall, through these subordinated courts, be brought ultimately under the supervision and control of the whole.

In our own church, you know, we have first the Church Session, which is a court composed of the Pastor and Ruling Elders of a particular congregation. Then we have the Presby-

tery, composed of all the Ministers of a particular section of country, with a Ruling Elder from each church in the same. Then we have the Synod, composed of the Ministers and representatives of the churches in a larger section of country, comprising at least three Presbyteries. Then we have, lastly, the General Assembly, which is the highest court of all.

It is not necessary, in order that a church shall be Presbyterian, that it have precisely the same number of courts, or that they be called by precisely the same names. Many of the Reformed churches have what they call *classes*, which correspond to our Presbyteries, and a General Synod, instead of our General Assembly. The principle, however, is the same, namely, that the whole government of the Church is committed to courts composed of officers, who belong exclusively to the two classes of Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders; and that these courts sustain such a relation to each other, that the authority of a higher court is binding upon the lower ones, and thus, through them, the whole church is united together.

Now, this being the essential principle of Presbyterianism, it will not be difficult to show that the true church of God, in all the ages of the world, where it has been free from human innovations, has been essentially Presbyterian. Let us look first at the church of God under the Old Testament economy. The earliest record which we have of its permanent, visible organization, is that which is contained in the history of the calling of Abraham, and the constitution of a church within his house. This is the origin of the Jewish Church, which, for ages, was composed of the "seed of faithful Abraham." Now, let us ask the question: What officers were appointed in this visible church? The only officers we read of are the *Elders* of Abraham's house. One of these is distinctly mentioned (Gen. 24: 2,) as the servant and Elder of his house, (not the *eldest servant*, as it is translated in our version, but the *servant and Elder*.) We hear but little of these Elders during the lifetime of Abraham, as we hear but little of the constitution of the church; but afterwards they appear as distinctly recog-

nized officers of the house of God. Thus, when Moses was sent as the deliverer of God's people from the bondage of Egypt, he was directed (Ex. 3: 16,) to go and gather the "Elders of Israel" together, and deliver his message to them, as the divinely appointed rulers of the congregation. When he was sent to demand of Pharaoh the release of the children of Israel, he was instructed to take with him (Ex. 3: 18,) the "Elders of Israel," as the representatives of the chosen people. When in the wilderness Moses received the Law from the hands of Jehovah, on Mount Sinai, he wrote it, and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, and *the Elders* (Deut. 31: 9) as the spiritual rulers of God's people. And so in every instance in which any authority is exercised, or any discipline administered, we find these *Elders* referred to as the rulers in the Church. They are sometimes called "the Elders," sometimes "the Elders of Israel;" sometimes "the Elders of the congregation;" sometimes "the Elders of the people," but they appear on every

page of the history of the Jewish church, as its divinely appointed and recognized rulers.

The term *Elder* was not one simply of seniority, or of respect, as some have supposed. There were many Elders in age, who were not Elders in office. The term *Elder* implied official rank and position. Thus, when the Lord directed Moses to select out of the Elders of the tribes, seventy, who should constitute the highest council of the church, or, as we might say, its General Assembly, he instructed him (Numb. 11: 16,) to choose only those whom he certainly knew to be "Elders of the people, and officers over them."

The Jewish Church was, therefore, governed by Elders in the days of Moses. It was so in the days of Joshua, when there were Elders in every city, (Josh. 7: 6; 20: 4; 24: 31, &c.,) and in the days of the Judges, (Judges 2: 7; 8: 16; Ruth 4: 2, &c.,) and in the days of Samuel, (1 Sam. 15: 30; 16: 4; &c.,) and in the days of David, (2 Sam. 5: 3; 17: 4, &c.,) and in the days of Elijah, and Elisha, (1 Kings 21: 11; 2 Kings 6: 32, &c.,) and in the days of Ezekiel,

(Ezek. 14: 1; 20: 1, &c.,) and in the days of Ezra, when the Old Testament canon was completed, (Ezra 10: 14, &c.,) and in the days when our Saviour appeared in the world, (Matt. 21: 23; 27: 1; Mark 8: 31; Luke 22: 52, &c.)

It is sometimes asserted that these Elders were only civil rulers, and not ecclesiastical; that they were officers of the State, and not of the Church; that in the Jewish commonwealth the priests had the exclusive authority in spiritual matters, and the Elders in secular matters. But, so far is this from being the case, that, as we shall soon see, the priests themselves, ruled, not as priests, but as Elders, and in every act of government were associated with the "Elders of the people;" while the Council of the Seventy, or the *Sanhedrim*, as it was afterwards called, was composed entirely of Elders, chosen from the different tribes of Israel. It is true, that these Elders had many civil duties to perform, because at that time the Church and State were temporarily united. But their functions as civil officers, resulting from this temporary connection, were only in-

cidental and temporary. Their highest functions were spiritual. They were pre-eminently ecclesiastical rulers. They had charge of all the interests of the "church of God, which was in the wilderness with the Angel which spake to Moses in the Mount Sinai." The fact that they had civil duties to perform, and secular questions to decide, no more proves that they were not church officers, than does the sitting of the Bishops of the Established Church of England in the House of Lords prove that they are not church officers.

In this sense, therefore, we may certainly say that the Old Testament Church was Presbyterian, inasmuch as its whole government was administered by *Elders*, chosen from among the people, and set apart to the office of rulers over the house of God. It was also Presbyterian in a second sense, and a very important one, namely, that these Elders were of two distinct kinds, Elders of the priests, and Elders of the people. This appears very clearly in the composition of the Sanhedrim, or highest council of the Jews. This body consisted *ex-*

clusively of Elders. (Numb. 11: 16.) These seventy Elders were chosen from "all the tribes of Israel." Those, therefore, from the tribe of Levi were, of course, of the priestly office. They were, therefore, both Elders and Priests, adding to their functions as rulers, those of ministers before the altars in the Tabernacle. To distinguish them from those Elders who were taken from the other tribes, they were called Priest Elders, or Elders of the Priests (2 Kings 19: 2; Is. 37: 2, &c.,) and afterwards Chief Priests, one being taken, in later days, from each of the twenty-four courses of priests in the Temple. We have, therefore, the two kinds of Elders, called in the Old Testament, "Elders of the Priests," and "Elders of the People," constituting together the "Elders of the Congregation," or the "Elders of Israel," called in the New Testament "the Chief Priests and Elders of the people."

Here, therefore, you have, under the Old Economy, two kinds of Elders, precisely corresponding to the two kinds in the Presbyterian Church at the present day. You have the

Elders of the people, who are chosen simply to rule, like our Ruling Elders; and you have the Elders of the Priests, who, in addition to their functions as rulers, have the higher and holier ones of administering before God in sacred things, as do the ministers of the gospel at the present day.

The identity of the two forms of government becomes still more apparent when you consider that, under the Old Economy, the Elders of Israel ruled, not singly, but jointly, in regularly organized church courts. No officer in the Jewish church had any such individual authority as that now exercised by a Bishop in the Episcopal Diocese, or a Presiding Elder in a Methodist District. In every city of the tribes there was a "Bench of Elders," which held its sessions in the gate of the city; and to this court of Elders all questions of government in the district were submitted. In the smaller cities, this court corresponded to our Presbyterian Church Sessions; in the larger to our Presbytery. There was another court, as we learn from Jewish writers, composed of

not less than twenty-three Elders, to which appeals could be made from the decision of the "Elders of the Gates," and which correspond in this respect to our Synod; while above all these was the Sanhedrim, or highest court of appeal, corresponding to our General Assembly.

Having thus seen that the Church, under the Old Economy, was essentially Presbyterian, let us see if it remained so after the coming of Christ. In order to understand this more clearly, we must look for a moment at some changes that had taken place during the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and after their return. As, during the period of captivity, the Jews were cut off from all the privileges of the temple service, they had instituted—no doubt by divine direction—the system of synagogue worship; and as, after their return, there were great obstacles in the way of their attendance upon the annual feasts at Jerusalem, this system was still continued. In every city the Elders caused a house of worship to be erected, which was called a synagogue, or place of assemblage. There, on every Sabbath day, they

collected the people for religious worship. They were known as the Elders, or Rulers of the Synagogue. They had one of their number, who usually conducted public worship, and was called the Angel, or *Messenger* of the synagogue, because he read, or delivered God's message to the people. The services on Sabbath consisted of prayer, the singing of psalms and hymns, the reading of the Scriptures, exhortations, and collections of alms for the poor. When our Saviour appeared, therefore, He found, in every city of the Jews, a synagogue, with its bench of Elders, its ordinances of worship, and its provisions for the poor, as we have them in our congregations at the present day. When He went from city to city, He entered into their synagogues on the Sabbath day, and taught the people. He instructed his disciples to submit questions of discipline to the Church; that is, to these officers, who were its representatives. It is true that these church-sessions, if I may so call them, did not recognize, in most instances, the authority of our Saviour. "He came to His own, and His own received

Him not." The Elders joined with the Scribes and the Priests in putting him to death. But after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, there were many of these Jewish congregations, in which great numbers were converted to Christianity, so that the congregation was, in faith, no longer Jewish, but Christian. In these cases the synagogue became a church edifice. The Elders of the synagogue became Elders of the Christian Church. The rite of Baptism took the place of the rite of Circumcision. The Lord's Supper came in the room of the Passover. The first day of the week took the place of the Jewish Sabbath. Hymns to Christ as God mingled with the old synagogue anthems to Jehovah. The epistles of inspired Apostles were read along with the Old Testament Scriptures; and thus, by a transition as natural as it was impressive, the Jewish church became Christian, with all its essential features unchanged.

That this is no mere theory, or special pleading on the part of the advocates of Presbyterianism, will be evident to every attentive reader

of the following extracts from the works of one of the most learned and eminent prelates of the Episcopal Church. The late Archbishop Whately, of Dublin, as distinguished for his learning as for his integrity and piety, in his work, entitled "THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST DELINEATED, in which he traces the origin of the first Christian churches planted by apostolic hands, uses the following langauge. (See Ed. of Carter & Bros., New York, 1864, p. 29.)

"It appears highly probable—I might say morally certain—that wherever a Jewish synagogue existed, that was brought, the whole or the chief part of it, to embrace the gospel, the Apostles did not there so much *form* a Christian church (or congregation: Ecclesia,) as *make an existing congregation Christian*," (the italics are his own,) "by introducing the Christian sacraments and worship, and establishing whatever regulations were requisite for the newly adopted faith, leaving the machinery (if I may so speak,) of government unchanged; the rulers of synagogues, elders and other officers, (whether spiritual or ecclesiastical, or

both,) being already provided in the existing institutions." "And," he continues, "it is likely that several of the earliest Christian churches did originate in this way; that is, that they were *converted synagogues*, which *became* Christian churches as soon as the members, or the main part of the members, acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah. * * * And when they founded a church in any of those cities in which (and such were probably a very large majority,) there was no Jewish synagogue that received the gospel, it is likely that they would conform, in a great measure, to the same model."

Here, then, is a statement from one of the highest functionaries, and most learned writers of the Episcopal Church, that the primitive Church was built upon the model of the Jewish synagogue, the government of which, as we have already seen, was distinctively Presbyterian. A careful study of the Acts and Epistles will lead us also to the conclusion that the Church of the Apostles was essentially Presbyterian. On their missionary voyages they

"ordained Elders in every city." As in many of these cities there was only a small congregation of believers, the Elders ordained in them must have been Ruling Elders, as the language implies that there were several in one city. These Elders ruled in councils, or courts, that were distinctly Presbyterian. Timothy was ordained by "the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." The Synod which met at Jerusalem, (Acts, chap. 15,) was a Synod composed of the Apostles and Elders.

Even the Apostles sat in these councils as Elders. They constantly recognize themselves as such. "The Elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder." (1 Pet. 5: 1.) "The Elder unto the well beloved Gaius."(3 John 1.) The office of Apostle was extraordinary and temporary. The office of Elder was essential and permanent. Hence, they speak of themselves as Elders; partakers of that sacred office and authority which ever abide in the Church.

The only officers of the New Testament Church who had authority to rule, were the

Elders. Under this generic title all the spiritual rulers of the church are arranged. Apostles, Evangelists, Bishops: all are Elders. An Elder who, like Peter, is also a divinely commissioned "witness of the sufferings of Christ," is an Apostle. An Elder who, like Titus, is sent forth with a divine commission to organize churches and ordain Elders, in every city, is an Evangelist. An Elder to whom is committed the oversight of a particular congregation, is a Bishop. Those Elders who are ordained simply to take part in the government of the Church, are Ruling Elders. Those Elders who, in addition to this function of ruling, have the high duty devolved upon them to preach the gospel, are Ministers of the Gospel. Thus it is that, in the New Testament, as in the Old, the *Presbyter* or *Elder* appears as the essential officer in the church; and the two classes of Elders, "Elders that rule," and "Elders that both rule and labour in the word and doctrine," come clearly into view. As in the Jewish Church, so in the Apostolic Church we have *Minister-Elders*, and *People-Elders:* Elders

consecrated to the ministry, and Elders engaged in secular callings; these two kinds of Elders, meeting together in church courts, and by their joint authority, ruling and governing the Church.

It would be easy, if there were time, to show that the Elders were the highest permanent officers in the Apostolic Church; that the ministers of the gospel were all of the same rank, and that the Bishops spoken of in the New Testament were only the pastors of individual congregations, as in the Presbyterian Church at the present day; but I must pass over these points, and hasten forward to show that this Presbyterian form of government has continued in the purer branches of the Church from the days of the Apostles to the present time. It was not a great while after the death of the Apostles, until many innovations began to be introduced into the Church, and amongst others the form of government known as Diocesan Episcopacy, in which one minister exercises authority over a large number of ministers and churches. At first the pastor, or Bishop, of a

city church, assumed authority over the country churches around him. Then several cities came under the control of one Bishop, and at length these Bishops assumed a rank and authority greater than that of their brethren.

It was a long time, however, before these changes in the government of the Church became general. In the days of Augustine, who flourished during the latter part of the fourth century, and the first part of the fifth, there were, in that part of North Africa, which was subject to the Romans, five hundred orthodox Bishops, and four hundred Donatist Bishops, making nine hundred Bishops in all, or more than there are diocesan Bishops in the whole Roman Catholic Church at the present day. Now, if you will examine any map of the Roman Empire, and see what a narrow belt of territory in North Africa was subject to the Romans, you will see at once that these nine hundred Bishops were not Bishops of dioceses, but of congregations—Presbyterian Bishops, like the pastors of our churches now.

So also, in Ireland, in the days of St. Pat-

rick, (about the middle of the fifth century,) there were three hundred and sixty-five Bishops. Now, it is not probable that at that time Ireland was half as populous as it is now, and yet, though four-fifths of its population is now Roman Catholic, it has only four Archbishops, and twenty-four Bishops. These three hundred and sixty-five bishops, therefore, in the days of St. Patrick, were Presbyterian Bishops. They were pastors of churches, and St. Patrick himself was nothing more than a Presbyterian Evangelist, when he came into Ireland.

When, after the lapse of centuries, the great mass of the visible church had become corrupt in doctrine and in practice, and had substituted the inventions of man for the sure testimony of the Word of God, there were still two distinct branches of the visible church, in which the truth was preserved in its purity, and in which the simple principles of Presbyterianism were never abandoned for the more imposing forms of Prelacy.

The first of these two branches of the church which preserved the primitive form of Presby-

terian Church government, were the Waldenses, in the valleys of the Piedmont, in France. It is a historical fact, that admits of no question, that from a very remote period, earlier a great deal than the date of the establishment of the Romish Church, there dwelt in these valleys of the Alps and Pyrennees, a body of Christian people, who never submitted to the authority of the Church of Rome; who maintained the purity of primitive doctrine, and the simplicity of primitive worship; and who claimed that their doctrines and discipline had been transmitted in the direct line of their churches, from the days of the Apostles. They were called *Vallenses*, or *Wallenses*, inhabitants of the valleys; and down to the period of the Reformation, amidst all the fires of persecution kindled for them by the Romish Church, they remained unshaken in their faith, a band of godly men, protesting against the corruptions of the Church of Rome, claiming to be the true successors, in doctrine and polity, of the Apostles and early martyrs. To their early origin, their general orthodoxy, their simplicity of

worship, and their blameless lives, even their persecutors bear repeated and unequivocal testimony.

Now, all the records of these Waldensian Christians show that their church government was distinctly Presbyterian. If any of my young readers are in doubt upon this point, they have only to refer to Wharey's Church History, with the appendix by Dr. Samuel Miller, or to Smyth's Lectures on Presbytery and Prelacy, to find the evidences upon which this statement is based. Here, then, through all the dark ages, was one Church, at least, that continued to be Presbyterian in its government and order; a Church that sealed its testimony through centuries with the blood of its martyrs, and whose light was still burning in the valleys of the Piedmont, when Farel and Luther and Calvin kindled on the mountain tops the watch-fires of the Reformation.

There was still another witness for pure Presbyterianism through all these dark ages. I refer to the church of the ancient Culdees, in Scotland. To trace the origin of Christianity

in Scotland, we must go back almost to the very days of the Apostles; for Tertullian, who lived in the second century, tells us that those portions of Britain, which were inaccessible to the Romans, (by which he refers to the mountainous districts of Scotland,) had already submitted to Christ. The Culdee Church, however, owes its establishment to Columba, a native of Ireland, who, about the middle of the sixth century, went as an evangelist into the midst of the Picts of Scotland; and having converted great multitudes of them to Christianity, established upon the island of Iona a seminary of learning, for the purpose of training pastors for the churches which he had founded, and evangelists to carry the gospel into the benighted regions which he had not yet visited. These ministers were called *Culdees*, and the churches which they formed *Culdee* churches, the word Culdee being probably a corruption of the term *Cultor Dei*, a worshipper of the true God. This church of the Culdees, or worshippers of the true God, existed for many centuries without any connec-

tion with the Church of Rome. They refused to submit to the authority of the Romish clergy, and for many centuries, almost until the very dawn of the Reformation, maintained their ground against the encroachments of the Romish See. They opposed bitterly the doctrines of the Church of Rome concerning auricular confession, the celibacy of the clergy, the worship of saints, the real presence, &c. Their form of government was essentially Presbyterian. They had a Synod, or Assembly, to the members of which they gave the name of *Seniores* or *Elders*. These Elders, in their collective capacity, appointed and ordained to the ministry. Their ministers were all of equal rank. Those who had permanent charge of churches were called Bishops, but their office and authority were simply those of Pastors of churches, and they held no higher rank and exercised no greater authority than those of their brethren who sat with them in council.

It is scarcely necessary to say to the readers of this little volume that these principles of Presbyterianism, preserved by the Waldenses

and Culdees, until the time of the Reformation, and adopted by most of the Reformers, continue until the present day to lie at the basis of the government of the great body of the Reformed Churches. All those churches, on the continent of Europe, which, in distinction to to the Lutheran, are known as the Reformed Churches, are distinctly Presbyterian in government. These large bodies of Christians, including the Reformed Churches of France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland, &c., are of the same order and discipline with our own Presbyterian Church; and when to these Presbyterian Churches on the continent we add the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales, and the various branches of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in this country, we have a collective body of Presbyterians in the world, amounting to 34,000,000 persons, embracing one half of the Evangelical Christians in the world, and outnumbering at least tenfold the members of those branches of the Evangelical

Church which deny the validity of Presbyterian ordination.

I have thus passed rapidly over the history of Presbyterianism, not in any controversial spirit, but to show to my young readers that there is every reason why they should cherish an intelligent love of the church of their fathers. It is pre-eminently the church of the Covenant. From the days when its foundations were laid in the covenant with Abraham, on behalf of himself and his seed, until the present time, its history has been the history of a solemn league and covenant with God against heresy and innovation in doctrine and discipline. Its covenants have been covenants sealed, like the first one, with blood. Those primitive martyrs, who were stoned, were sawn asunder, were slain with the sword, "of whom," as the apostle declares, "the world was not worthy," were witnesses for the pure principles of Presbyterianism. Those heroic Vallenses, who were hunted, like harts, from crag to crag of their native mountains, and were dashed in pieces by scores, as their persecutors hurled

them over the steep mountain precipice—those men who, for ten centuries, defied the malice and cunning of their persecutors, were Presbyterians. And those grand old Covenanters of Scotland, who loved not their lives to the death "for Christ, and for His crown," were Presbyterians. The old church has come down through the ages, with her garments, like those of her glorious Lord, dyed in blood. The most illustrious Martyrs, the most renowned Confessors, the most valiant Reformers, are hers. Let us love her for what she is, and venerate her for what she has been. Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces. For our brethren and companions' sakes let us now say, peace be within her. Because of the House of the Lord our God, let us ever seek her good.

My young friends, I take my leave of you at the close of this little volume, with feelings of deep and tender interest. It will not be a great while until we, who are now the workers in the vineyard, will be sleeping under the sod. This dear old church, with its covenants and sym-

bols, we must leave under God to you. Your spiritual character must leave its impression upon all the ordering and discipline of its courts. Oh, that the Lord may bless you, and enrich you with His grace, and prepare you to stand up like men under the responsibilities that are to devolve upon you, so that when, in a green old age, you transmit to others the legacy of Presbyterianism which you have received from us, you may transmit it in its purity, having your names honourably associated with the increase of its prosperity, and the extension of its influence throughout the world!

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

A Word to Christian Parents.

"Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain; but a Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."—*Prov.* xxxi. 30.

A Word to Christian Parents.

O thoughtful Christian parent, who realizes the responsibility that rests upon him, or feels the proper interest in the well being and happiness of his children, can read the preceding narratives, with the well authenticated facts upon which they are based, without asking himself the question: "How may I secure for my own household the same rich grace which was bestowed upon these dear children; so that, if it should please God to call my little ones away from me by death, the same abundant consolation may be afforded me in the evidence of their peaceful and triumphant victory over death?" Closely in the wake of this question, of such vital interest, follow others, calculated to awaken

feelings of sadness: Why is it that in so few households the same early manifestations of the Spirit's presence and power are witnessed? Why are so few of the children of the Church savingly converted in early childhood? Why do so few seem to be deeply impressed with the importance of religious things? Why is it that, while here and there one is found whose first opening years are consecrated to God, the vast majority of our youth grow up thoughtless and unconcerned upon the subject of religion, running riot in every form of worldliness and dissipation, and dying (if they die in youth,) without leaving behind them any assured evidence of meetness for the kingdom of Heaven?

It seems to me that the heart of many an anxious parent, into whose hands this little volume will fall, must earnestly re-echo the question: Why is this? Why is it that these dear children received such an early baptism of the Holy Spirit, and were scarcely conscious of the time when their hearts were not under the power of His grace, while my children have

never had any such experiences, and seem altogether indifferent to religious things?

In answering this question, it is necessary, first of all, to recognize the infinite sovereignty of the grace of God. The gifts of His Holy Spirit are bestowed "according to the counsel of His own will." "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." In so far as these remarkable examples of early piety are to be traced to the extraordinary influences of His Holy Spirit,—and it certainly is to these influences alone that we can trace them as their source,—we can only say, as did our blessed Lord: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." There are, perhaps, no parents who would be further from ascribing any merit or praise to themselves in connection with these wonderful experiences, than the parents of Hart, and Sallie, and Mary Kerr. On the other hand, deeply conscious of much unworthiness, and many failures in duty, none would be more ready to lay down all the praise at the foot of the throne of God's sovereign grace, saying,

"not unto us, O, Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake." "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

When God is pleased thus, of His sovereign mercy and goodness, to pour out His grace upon a household, to put honour upon His covenant, and to make bright and illustrious examples of the power of His truth and Spirit over the heart of the smallest child, He has put an honour, not upon that household alone, but upon His whole Church. The fragrant memories which the Holy Spirit leaves behind Him, when He has done His work, and taken the sainted ones away, are the legacy of the whole Church of God; and every parent may rejoice in these rich tokens of the covenanted mercy and grace of God.

But while the grace of God is in the highest sense sovereign; while in the domain of grace, as in the domain of nature, God sits upon a throne of absolute and unquestioned authority, doing "according to His will, in the army

of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" and while He is free to dispense His Spirit, or to withhold Him at His will, yet it is none the less true, that in grace, as in nature, God works ordinarily by means. There are certain channels through which He is pleased to communicate His Holy Spirit. There are certain means, the use of which He is pleased to own and bless. While these means have no efficacy in themselves; while they are entirely dependent for their virtue upon His sovereign grace communicated in them, and while He is free to work above them and without them; yet, ordinarily, they are the instruments by and through which He exerts His power upon the soul. God's grace, therefore, is sovereign; but it is by no means arbitrary. It has respect to a wisely ordered and perfectly adjusted plan, which includes all the means that are necessary to secure the salvation of every human soul; and if families are found in which children are irreligious, thoughtless, or profane, it is not because of any unwillingness

on the part of God to pour out His Spirit, but because of some defect in the use of the means of grace.

It is to this point that I would call most earnestly the attention of Christian parents. Inasmuch as God's covenant with His children embraces not only believers, but their children also; inasmuch as the means through which He communicates His grace, are means which may be made available for children, as well as for persons of mature years; and inasmuch as we know, from the experience of the past, that His Spirit does often times most wonderfully operate upon the minds and hearts of those who are yet in early childhood, we have a right both *to pray for* and *to expect* the early conversion of our children; and if they are not converted in childhood, or opening youth, the fault lies at our own door.

This may appear very startling to some. There is a great deal of skepticism in the Church in reference to this subject of the conversion of little children. President Edwards speaks of it in his day:

"It has, heretofore, been looked upon as a very strange thing when any have seemed to be savingly wrought upon and remarkably changed in their childhood; but now, (referring to the revival in the church of Northampton, Mass., of which he was pastor,) I suppose near thirty were, to appearance, so wrought upon, between ten and fourteen years of age, and two between nine and ten, and one about four years of age."

This last instance of conversion appeared so remarkable at the time, that President Edwards wrote a full history of it, which is found in a little work in many of our Sabbath school libraries, with the title, *Phœbe Bartlett.* The same practical skepticism remains, to a considerable extent, to the present day. Parents do not expect the early conversion of their children; do not hope for it, or labour for it, or pray for it. They would be astonished and incredulous if such a thing should take place!

And yet is there any reason why our children should not be converted in childhood? Did not our blessed Lord, on more than one occasion, say: "Except ye be converted, and become

as *little children*, ye shall not enter into the the kingdom of heaven." "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein," &c. Is there anything in the plan of salvation which the child cannot apprehend as truly as the grown man? Is not faith in Jesus Christ the simplest, most child-like exercise of the human mind and heart? If those children who die in infancy, are regenerated by the Holy Spirit before they pass that mysterious bourne, beyond which there is no remission of sins, and no work of grace, may not the same Almighty Agent, who transformed their natures, that they might be new creatures in Christ Jesus, transform also the natures of those who are to remain in this world of sin?

On the other hand, have we not the very highest encouragement to hope for the conversion of children? Are not their hearts in early childhood more easily impressed with truth, and more free from the deadening, corrupting influence of the world? Are they not more docile, more confiding, more distrustful of self,

and more willing to lean upon another for strength? Practically, do they not receive religious impressions with more earnestness, exhibit deeper emotion under the influence of religious truth, melt down with more tenderness at the story of the Cross, and reach forth toward the thought of a future heaven with more intensity and vividness of conception than persons of mature age? And if the whole matter of salvation hinges upon the simple exercise of a childlike faith in Jesus, why may not every child believe and be saved? And if conversion to God in childhood is possible, why may we not expect it, and ask it? If these dear children are God's chosen ones; if He has designed in the councils of eternity to call them into His kingdom, why should He not call them at the third hour, as well as at the sixth, or ninth, or eleventh? Why should any portion of their precious lives be spent in the service of Satan? Why should the dew and freshness of their youth be exhausted before they are transplanted into the garden of the Lord?

When we consider how open to all tender

impressions childhood is; when we reflect upon the fact that it is the glory of the gospel, that, while its truths are hid from the wise and prudent, they are revealed unto babes; when we think of the tender and intense love of Jesus to little children, as expressed by taking them in his arms and blessing them, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and when we think of the infinite power and grace of the Holy Spirit; is it not wonderful that more of the children of believing parents are not converted in childhood? Is it not strange that there are so many pious parents in the Church weeping over ungodly sons, and worldly minded, pleasure-seeking daughters, in whose hearts no saving impressions of divine truth seem to rest?

Be assured, brethren, that there is a fault somewhere. God has said, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee;" and God is not "a man that he should lie, or the son of man that He should repent." Let us proceed to inquire earnestly where this difficulty lies,

which withholds the converting grace of God from the hearts of our children. And when the writer of these lines thinks of the dear little ones whom God has given to him, he would join in the prayer, which he trusts will ascend from many a parent's heart: Lord give unto thy servant light that he may see clearly the path of duty; forgive wherein he has erred; and replenish him with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, that, like Abraham of old, he may command his household after him, in paths of holiness and truth.

I. The first difficulty to which I would call attention, is found in the manifest failure of many Christian parents to apprehend the reality of the covenant which God has made with believing parents and their children, and the consequent failure to take hold of this covenant by faith, and appropriate to themselves the precious promises which it contains. Now, a covenant is a sworn agreement or compact between two parties, in which certain conditions or stipulations are affixed, upon compliance with which by one party the other brings himself under

obligation to discharge certain offices, or to confer certain benefits in return. The stipulations agreed to by the first party constitute what are called the *conditions* of the covenant. The corresponding benefits constitute the *promises* of the covenant. In the original covenant between God and Abraham, which lies at the basis of the visible church, that which Abraham covenanted to do, and which constituted the *condition* of the covenant, was summarily expressed in the words: "Walk thou before me, and be thou perfect." It implied that Abraham, as the head of a believing household, was to consecrate himself, with all that was his, to the service of God. He was not only publicly to confess, for himself, the true God; publicly to recognize and accept the redemption which God had provided through the sacrifice of atoning blood, and through the regeneration of the Holy Ghost; and publicly to consecrate himself to the true worship and service of God; but he was publicly to confess this Jehovah as the God of his children also; the God whom they were to be taught to fear,

to love, and to obey. He was publicly to accept this salvation through the blood of a divine Victim, as the salvation of his children. To the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, their earliest thoughts were to be directed, that they might believe on Him that justifieth the ungodly, and have their faith counted to them for righteousness. He was, moreover, to consecrate his children to the service of God, as truly as he consecrated himself—to feel that, by the condition of this covenant, they were in a peculiar sense the Lord's, in a sense as high and holy as that in which the believer, by the act of self-consecration, gives himself up to the service of God. The condition of the covenant, (as that covenant lay at the foundation of the visible church,) embraced, in a word, just what every believing parent is expected and required to do—to consecrate his children to God—to throw them in faith upon the arms of God's covenant mercy, and in daily faith and daily prayer, by the help of divine grace, to rear them as the true servants of God, and the heirs of the promises in Christ. Now, such

being the *condition* of the covenant, let us inquire what was its promise: "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." You perceive that there is no difference in the language between what is promised to Abraham personally and what is promised to him in reference to his children. There is no condition annexed to the one promise that is not also annexed to the other. If the words, "I will be a God to thee," imply that all spiritual blessings necessary to salvation should be bestowed upon Abraham, the following words imply the same fulness of spiritual blessing for his children. If the first words imply that Abraham's faith in God, and confession of Him before men shall be blessed of God to the securing of all needed grace in this life, and glory in the life to come, the succeeding words surely teach, that in some way connected with that act of faith and consecration stand those covenanted blessings which are to descend upon his children through him, and thus constitute them the "heirs of the promises." Under this Old Testament covenant, therefore, the believing parent covenanted

not only for himself, but also for his children. He not only entered into solemn engagement to train them for the service and glory of God; but his faith was taught to connect with this solemn engagement the precious truth of God's acceptance of his children into covenant relationship with Himself, and to draw from it all the encouragement and comfort which such a thought was fitted to afford. This is the truth which was implied, when, in respect to the faith of Abraham, the rite of circumcision was administered both to himself and to Isaac his son. It was a proclamation of the truth, that the same faith which brought him into connection with the covenant of God, brought Isaac also within the pale of its blessings, and that the same salvation which came to him came also to his house. This same truth of God's covenant was held forth through all the old economy. When the proselyte was admitted, upon public profession of his faith, to the number of the visible church of God, he received, not only in his own person, but in the person of his children, the seal of the covenant in circum-

cision. The same precious truth appears, when the apostles, as they receive believing parents into the church, in every recorded instance, receive their children with them, administering to all alike the same precious seal in baptism. There can be no truth more apparent to an unprejudiced mind, than that this same covenant which God originally declared to be an "everlasting covenant," still exists in all its binding force, and that the believing parent, who takes hold of this covenant, and pleads it with God, and trains up his children under a sense of its preciousness, and in a faithful discharge of its obligations, may as really hope for and expect the salvation of his children, as Abraham confidently relied upon the promise of God, which was made to him, and afterwards confirmed to Isaac his son.

The ordinance of baptism is the public and official seal which God puts upon the covenant between His people and Himself. Every believing parent, who receives upon the person of his child the sacramental water, in that very act solemnly ratifies this covenant between

Abraham and God. He takes upon Himself the same obligations which Abraham took. He professes Himself an heir of the same blessings with faithful Abraham; and if this covenanting with God be not on His part a mere form, an idle and unmeaning ceremony, it is a solemn agreement with God for the life—the eternal life of his child. It is the assumption of vows, upon the performance of which hinges, in great measure, the everlasting salvation of the little one. It is as though, in that solemn hour, God were reaching down to the parent the title-bond of his child to an inheritance in heaven. If he has faith to take hold of the heavenly indenture, and grace to comply with its conditions, the immortal soul of his child may, through eternity, live to bless God for the solemn transactions of that covenant hour. If he has not faith to look through the ordinance to those great spiritual truths, which it is designed to signify and seal, the solemnities of baptism, however august and imposing they may be, are but an idle mockery. They are but vain and unmeaning ceremonies, that can

impart no strength to the parent, and secure no blessings to the child. They are, indeed, as Jude so significantly expresses it, "clouds without water,—trees whose fruit is withered away."

And yet how many parents utterly fail to appreciate the true spiritual import of the sacrament in which they are engaged. With how many is the ordinance of baptism simply an impressive form, by which the child publicly receives the name which is called upon it. With how many more is it regarded simply as a pleasant occasion of public thanksgiving to God for the advent of a new member to the domestic circle. With how many more is it simply a ritual, through which the Church requires its members to go, and with which they comply, simply upon the authority of the Church, without ever once inquiring as to the deep significance of the Sacrament and its vital relation to the covenant of God. Reader, are you found in the number of any one of the classes enumerated above? And can you wonder if God does not bless you in the conversion and salvation of your child, when, so far from

complying with the conditions of the covenant which He has ordained, you have never yet realized the existence of such a covenant, have never yet taken hold of the great and precious truth which it contains, and never yet claimed for your children the precious promise, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee."

Be assured, brethren, that just here is the source of much of the failure on the part of Christain parents, to secure for their children the inestimable blessing of early conversion to God.

At the present day, there are many who neglect altogether the precious ordinance of baptism. There are many who attend upon it with no true conception of its real significance and solemn import; who are far more concerned that the child may appear in elegant attire, and conduct itself with due decorum during the administration of the ordinance, than that it shall be brought into saving relation to the grace of God, and be made an heir of His heavenly kingdom.

And yet, when Christian parents thus, by their unbelief, render of no effect the promise of God; when they thus utterly fail to appropriate to themselves the priceless blessings of the covenant, they wonder that their children are irreligious and profane. We may rest assured that so long as the people of God fail to put due honour upon His covenant, and trust in His grace, the Church of Christ will not see that ingathering of its children for which it is authorized to pray and to hope. We, who are the children of the Covenanters, have need to take up God's covenant out of the dust, to put honour upon it, to plead it with Him, to rely upon His faithfulness, and to hope in His mercy. The parent who fails thus to appropriate to himself the provisions of the covenant, does a wrong to his child, that he can never undo, and discards a birthright for him, more precious than the title to princely estates, or imperial honours, or the highest distinctions of rank and fortune among men.

II. A second difficulty, in the way of the early conversion of our children to God, is

found in the failure, on the part of Christian parents, to begin the work of religious education at the proper season. There is a false idea in the minds of many parents as to the time when the religious instruction of their children should commence. They teach them in early childhood a few prayers, and verses of hymns, and the answers to a few questions in the Catechism. They read to them occasionally select portions of Scripture, and entertain them with stories, drawn from the word of God, and adapted to their infant minds; but they do not think of sitting down and explaining to their children the great method of salvation through Jesus Christ; of directing their minds to their need of this salvation, and of urging them to believe, at once, with all their hearts, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and consecrate themselves to His service. They do not speak to them of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, of His willingness to cleanse and renew the hearts of all who seek Him, and especially of those who are the objects of Christ's covenant love. All this they think

will be well enough when the child reaches the age of discretion, but at present it lies beyond the range of its faculties, and is a matter with which it has nothing to do.

No mistake could be greater. The child is capable of thinking upon the subject of religion, as soon as it is capable of thinking upon any subject. The consciousness of its own sinfulness is awakened along with the earliest consciousnesses of its moral nature. There is, even in early childhood, a felt necessity which the blessed tidings of the gospel alone are able to meet. Precious time, therefore, is lost by the parent who permits these early impressions to pass away, these early experiences to lose their freshness and their poignancy, without pointing the soul to Him who is the Fountain of Life.

But there is another consideration to which the attention of every thoughtful parent should be directed. The mind of the child is by no means, as so many parents seem to imagine, a *tabula rasa*—a blank page—upon which, at their leisure, they may write the precious truths of

salvation. The heart is not an open and unoccupied field, in which they may sow, at such season as may suit them, the golden grain. It is a field already sown. The soil is strewn thick with the seeds of sin. A depraved nature is there, ready to yield its harvest of briers and thorns, to choke the good seed of the kingdom. While the parent is quietly waiting for the time to sow, these seeds of depravity have already sprung up, and pre-occupied the ground. How often do we hear parents say of a child: "Oh, it is too young to be conversed with upon the subject of religion," when Satan has already poisoned its mind and heart with his evil suggestions, and brought it into a state of conscious enmity against God.

There can be no doubt that this is the reason of the failure in many households. Before the parent becomes deeply and earnestly enlisted in the cultivation of the spiritual nature of the child, its religious sensibilities have been deadened by contact with the world; its affections have been drawn away by the allurements of sense; its heart has been brought under the

dominion of the world, the flesh and the devil, and the parent finds a strong tide of worldliness to be stemmed, and a positive and habitual aversion to religious things to be overcome.

III. But a third difficulty, and one far more subversive of the great end of the family relation, is found in the failure of Christian parents to cultivate perfect freedom of communication, and intimacy of relationship, with their children. Many parents never seem to win the confidence of their children at all. They never come into confidential relations with them. The most intimate thoughts of the child's mind, the most sacredly cherished emotions of its heart, are never communicated to the parent. Between father, or mother, and child, there is an unnatural barrier of reserve—a wall of mutual separation. The few communications as to its inner life, which the natural yearnings of the child lead it to make, are treated with indifference, or, perhaps, made the occasion of severe rebuke.

At all events, they do not meet with the proper encouragement, and its timid nature recoils

upon itself. Henceforth, these deep experiences are concealed from parental view. As the nature unfolds, and the confiding spirit of early childhood begins to give place to the reserve and coyness of youth, there comes a studied habit of concealment. The parent sees only the outer life of the child. Its inner nature is a hidden mystery. And there are now long constituted and strengthened barriers to intimate and confidential intercourse, which can never be overcome, however much the parent may strive to secure the end.

And yet, how miserably has that parent failed to secure the true end of the family relationship, whose child respects him, fears him, obeys him, and, it may be, loves him, with a kind of distant, reverential affection; but whose bosom has never become the repository of the joys and sorrows of his child; whose heart never beats in conscious accord with the deep and yearning sympathies of its nature; to whom the most tender and sacred experiences of its young life are all a sealed book! How can such a parent exert over his child the in-

fluence which God designed him to exert? How can such a house, (for *home* it does not deserve to be called,) witness anything else than the growth into manhood and womanhood, of children who are virtually orphans in the world, and who, like waifs of the sea, are liable to be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine"—the easy sport of circumstances, the strong anchorage in the family circle being totally wanting?

How easy it is in early childhood to gain this intimacy and confidence to which I have referred. The little child naturally seeks to confide everything to its parent. Let but the slightest encouragement be given; let the little one only feel that there is a loving heart ready to sympathize with it; to rejoice with it; to solve patiently its difficulties; to bear forgivingly with its wrongs, and to lead it kindly by the hand through all the perplexities of its path; and how naturally, how unreservedly does it cast itself upon the bosom that seeks its confidence, and pour out there the very deepest

and most sacred thoughts and feelings of its heart.

And who shall say what advantage such a parent will have, in the training of his child! He is like the physician who has had the full diagnosis of the disease he is to treat. He is like the lawyer to whom the client has fully unburdened his case. He knows how to direct the mind and mould the character of his child; and at the same time, as the result of this loving intimacy, he acquires an influence over it—the influence of mind over mind, and of heart over heart,—the blessed results of which it is impossible to estimate.

But it is especially in reference to the subject of religion—that most important of all subjects,—that this want of intimacy between parents and children is lamentably great. In many households, where there is loving intimacy and mutual confidential communication upon every other subject, the subject of religion is entirely ignored, or if introduced at all, is reserved for stated and formal occasions, in which it assumes the form of catechetical in-

struction, but is not admitted to the tender and confidential communings by the hearth-stone.

Many parents talk intimately with their children upon every subject but this. On this they feel a reluctance to speak—a reluctance which grows more and more daily, until at length it would be easier for the parent to speak to any one else upon the subject of religion than to speak to his own child.

The writer of these lines once had a mother to call at his study, in deep anxiety of mind, saying to him, that she believed her daughter, then about fifteen years of age, to be deeply concerned upon the subject of religion, and wished him to visit her, and converse with her in reference to it. He immediately asked if the mother had conversed with her daughter upon the subject, and was told that she had not. "Then," said the Pastor, "you had best speak with her first, and find out the true state of her mind, so that I may be able to approach her without embarrassing her too much." The next morning the mother called again to say

that she had found it impossible to hold the conversation with her daughter. It had been so long since she had before attempted to introduce the subject, that though she had now made repeated efforts, it seemed as if her words clung to her lips, and she could not utter them. She again besought the pastor to visit her daughter, but he still declined, urging her to go home, and break down the unnatural wall of separation.

In the evening the struggle was again renewed. The mother, after deep and earnest prayer, sought the chamber of her daughter, where she found her alone; but the same difficulty appeared in the way. She essayed again and again to speak, but in vain; and at length, overcome by the violence of emotion, she pressed her daughter's hand in hers, and burst into a flood of tears.

How easy it is to trace the source of this embarrassment back through long years, to the early childhood of the daughter, and to neglected opportunities afforded, at that early period, for the cultivation of confidential inti-

macy upon the subject of religion. There was a time when, without the least hesitation, or embarrassment, this mother could have spoken to her child upon this, or any other subject. But she had permitted the wall of separation to grow up, and now she was realizing the bitter fruit of her neglect.

It must be so in every family, where this wall of partition is suffered to spring up; where the subject of religion is excluded from the conversations by the fireside, and at the table; where the parent, for fear of awakening unpleasant thoughts in the mind of his child, fails to deal faithfully with it in convincing it of its lost and helpless estate, of its imminent peril, and of its need of Christ, the only Deliverer from guilt and sin. When you consider to what extent the minds and hearts of our children are thus left to their own spontaneous workings, surrounded as they are by temptations, and depraved as they are by the taint of sin, is it any wonder that the children of pious parents are not converted to God in childhood?

Reader, are you conscious of the existence of this wall of separation in your own house? Does your conscience condemn you for not having any intimate acquaintance with the spiritual condition of your children? Do you feel that their religious experiences, if they have them, are all to you a sealed book? Do you feel a strange shrinking from conversation with them upon this all important subject? Go home, like this mother of whom I have spoken, kneel before God and ask of Him the grace that you need. Let not another evening draw to a close until the strange spell is removed, though you can only, in the intensity of your struggle, press silently the hand of your child, and burst into tears. Some of you have those about your knees who are still in tender childhood, whose hearts yearn for intimate communion with you. Take them home to your bosoms, in loving and confidential intercourse. Speak to them freely. Encourage them to keep back nothing from you. Let them see that you are worthy of their confidence; that you appreciate it; that you will cherish it as a sacred thing, and keep

it inviolate. Let your bosom be the willing receptacle of all that is joyous, or sad, in their daily experience. Above all, let religion be the subject of frequent and intimate conversation. In your daily walks; by the evening fireside; and in the bed chamber, as the little form is composing itself for sleep, let words of tenderest religious counsel be imparted; inquiries after religious truth be awakened and answered; let your child feel and know all the deep, yearning anxieties of your soul for its early conversion to God. Do this, and the Holy Spirit will bless, as He has so often blessed, words of tender, confidential admonition to the awakening of a new life in the soul of your child; and while the endearments of the domestic circle will be enhanced a thousand fold by the loving confidence which such intercourse will beget, you may be the honoured instrument, in the hands of God, of conveying that living Word, by which the soul of your child shall be for ever saved.

IV. There are other difficulties to which I would like to call the attention of parents; but

within the limits of this article it will only be proper to notice one other, and that is a failure on the part of the parent to make everything in connection with his child subservient, as far as possible, to the advancement of its religious interests. The true parent must feel, if he gives any serious consideration to the matter, that the one great end to be attained for his child, is the salvation of its priceless and undying soul. He must, therefore, feel that the one object which he is to seek, is to fit his child, not to shine in the halls of society, or to excel in the marts of trade, but to attain to eminence in the kingdom of God. Now, let this thought be carried out to its practical results, and how different would be the course of many Christian parents from that which they now pursue. Let us consider this course, in reference to two things.

First. Let us consider the choice of companionships for the child. How many parents are there in the land, who are governed in the selection of the society in which their children are to move, by the tendency of that society

to promote their spiritual welfare? How many are there, who, when their children are invited to a place of amusement, or to a social gathering, stop to ask themselves the question, "What influence will this probably have upon their religious character? Will their associates be religious, or irreligious? Will the amusements be such as are baleful to piety and to interest in religious things? How will attendance upon such places affect their interest in the Sabbath school, and in the prayer meeting, and in the ordinances of God's house, upon which they are dependent as the means of salvation?"

The parent will readily enough ask whether or not the society will be reputable; whether the acquaintances to be formed are of the same social position; whether the character of the children will suffer in the eyes of the world by going; and, if these questions are not satisfactorily answered, nothing will induce him to give his consent. But the questions, Will God approve of their going to such a place? Will they come away with as much reverence for

Him, with as earnest thoughts of their responsibility to Him, and with as faithful endeavours to love and serve Him, as they had when they went? These do not once enter their minds, or if they do, they are thrust aside by considerations of the elegance, the fashionableness, and the selectness of the party to which their children are invited. In how many cases is everything made to bend, not to the religious welfare of the child, but to its position in a fashionable, worldly-minded, and sinful society. You meet, for instance, an officer or member of one of our Churches, and say to him, "I am surprised to hear that you are sending your children to a dancing school. And what is his reply? "I know the rules of the Church forbid dancing, and I am as much opposed to it as any one can be, for I believe it is alike injurious to the physical, moral and spiritual interests of its votaries. I wish most heartily that it could be abolished altogether as a popular amusement; but then it is *the* amusement of young people now-a-days, and you must either exclude your children from society altogether, or teach

them to dance." You perceive, at once, that the prominent idea in the parent's mind is the fitting of his child for society. Rather than forego the advantages of a worldly, fashionable society, which asserts its supremacy over reason, health, religion, and everything else, a Christian father will encourage his child in that which he believes to be "alike injurious to the physical, moral and religious interests of its votaries." Can there be any wonder that the child, thus thrown into the midst of irreligious companionships and associations; taught from its earliest childhood that its first duty is to prepare itself to move well in society; that if society is worldly it must be worldly; if society is extravagant, it must be extravagant; if society dissipates, it must dissipate; that it must seek first the good opinion of society, and then, in subordination to that, the kingdom of God: can there be any wonder, I say, that the child is not converted to God? On the other hand, would it not be a very great wonder if, under such circumstances, the child should have any serious impressions at all?

It is very easy to anticipate the reply that many will make to this. They will meet us with the old trite saying, "Young people will be young people; they must have some kind of amusement, and you cannot apply the same rules to them that you do to grown people." This is all true enough; but in this very fact that "young people will be young people," is found the very strongest argument against the kind of amusements for which this class of persons would plead. Young people not only *must* have amusement—they *will* have it. Their nature is joyous; its activities are spontaneous. They will have sport of some kind. If you deny them amusement in one form, they will seek it in another. If you refuse them that which is unwholesome, they will turn to that which is wholesome. If, for instance, you refuse them the privilege of turning night into day, and of spending the hours that ought to be devoted to sleep in the feverish excitement of the dance, and the heated air of a ball room, then these sickly votaries of pleasure, who also turn day into night, by lying in bed,

with aching brows and enervated limbs, until high noon, would, after the refreshing sleep of the night, be up with the early dawn, to enjoy the bright sunshine, and the pure air, to find amusement in the carol of birds, and the fragrance of flowers, and the thousand sources of innocent enjoyment, with which God has surrounded us in life. It is but a pitiable plea, therefore, to say that your children must have amusement. It is a libel upon their innocent, joyous natures, to say that the theatre and the ball-room are necessary to their recreation. You may so habituate them to these places of unnatural and inordinate excitement, that they will lose all relish for purer and less stimulating pleasures. But keep them away from these, and before you lies a broad field of innocent sports and diversions, from which you may select at will, with the assurance that, together with amusement and recreation, your child may secure health, energy, vigour and purity.

But the parent is, perhaps, ready to say further, "Others send their children to these places of amusement, and mine must go, or be

debarred from society." And who are these others? Christian parents like yourself; excusing themselves on the ground that you, and others like you, allow your children these indulgences. Thus, while you are striving to shift your responsibility on them, they are seeking to rest theirs on you. You are mutually upholding one another in a course which is inconsistent with your covenant vows, in direct violation of the rules of the Church, and in the highest degree destructive of the spiritual interests of your children.

The other instance, in which the inconsistency of Christian parents appears, is in the selection of teachers and institutions of learning for their children. There is a false theory of education in vogue at the present day. It is comparatively new in the world, but its influence is as pernicious as its doctrines are novel. According to this theory, it does not come within the province of the teacher of secular learning, either to inculcate religious truth, or to exert a religious influence over his pupils. Secular education, and religious education, are

to be regarded as altogether dissociated from one another. The former is the work of the schoolroom; the latter is the work of the church. It is therefore no more the duty of the educator to inculcate religious truth, than of the pastor to teach mathematics. It is a question of no more consideration with the advocates of this theory, whether a teacher is religious or not, than it is whether a minister is a good mathematician or not. The question is not what religion a teacher is of, or indeed whether he is of any religion. Does he know the particular branches which he proposes to teach? Is he capable of imparting the requisite instruction in them? Will he devote himself faithfully to the work of inculcating them? Answer these questions satisfactorily, and no further inquires are necessary. It matters not whether he is a Romanist, a Jew, a Mohammedan, or an infidel. The question in reference to his religion is nothing. The language of this theory is: "I do not send my children to school to learn morality or religion. Morality I propose to teach them at home. Religion

I expect them to learn in the Sabbath school, and at church. I send them to school to learn the languages, mathematics, natural sciences, &c. Commend me to the man who can best teach them these. I will see that their religious interests are provided for elsewhere."

I affirm, distinctly, that this is a new theory of education. From the earliest period of civilization to the present time, secular and religious education have gone hand in hand. The teachers to whom have been committed the instruction of youth in secular learning, have been charged also with the duty of cultivating their moral and religious natures. Even in the days of Socrates, it was considered an offence worthy of death, that an instructor of youth should publicly disavow his belief in the false gods whom the nation worshipped. In all the ages, and in every land, religious instruction and secular education have gone hand in hand. It has been reserved for this day, when all the foundations of social order are being overthrown, to discover that there is no important

connection between the education of the intellect and the culture of the heart.

This theory is as detestable as it is new, for it puts asunder what God has joined together. In its aim to secure an education that is free from religious bias, it secures an education that is, in the highest degree, irreligious. In its aim to educate a nation of free-thinkers, it is in fact educating a nation of infidels.

Now, I do not presume that any Christian parent who reads these pages will go to the extent, in the adoption of this theory, that I have indicated above. And yet how many, in the selection of an institution of learning for their children, are governed exclusively by what they call its intellectual advantages. They do not deem it necessary to inquire what is the religious character of the teachers; what the nature and extent of the religious influence they exert over their pupils; what the spirit of consecration to God in which they pursue their high and important vocation; or what their probable influence upon the future religious life of their children. Practically, they act

upon the theory alluded to above, although they may utterly disclaim it in words. When they send their children to Roman Catholic schools and convents, to institutions presided over by ungodly and irreligious men, and to institutions, whatever may be the character of their founders and officers, in which religion is practically ignored, or false doctrine and heresy openly and publicly taught, what can be said but that they have fallen victims, unconsciously it may be, but none the less really and fatally, to this false notion of education. Now, in direct opposition to this theory, I maintain that the education of a Christian child, in all its parts, must bear distinct reference to its relations to God and eternity. It must be educated as an immortal being. It must be impressed at every step with the thought that its chief end is "to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever," and no education is of any real value that does not teach it to know, reverence, love, and obey Him.

A teacher, therefore, who is irreligious, or who does not feel the responsibility of mould-

ing the mind and heart of his pupil in the spirit of the Christian religion, whatever other qualities he may possess, is not fitted to be the educator of a Christian child. The institution of learning, whether it be the normal school of the city, the select institute for young ladies, or the University of the State, that inscribes over its doors the words, "No religious influence whatever exerted over the pupils," deserves to have written also the words, not unlike in sound, though altogether unlike in sense, to those of the ancient sage, "*Let no one who has an immortal soul enter here.*"

When you consider the character of many of the teachers who are employed in educating the youth of our Church, and then reflect upon the immense influence which the teacher exerts over the pupil, can you wonder that the youth themselves are irreligious. We have seen, in the biography of Mary Kerr, the great pains at which her parents were in securing for their children the services of a devotedly pious teacher, and in having all their education conducted under strictly religious influence. Is

not one secret of their early piety to be found in this? And is not the secret of the irreligion of many a child of pious, praying parents, to be found in the baleful influence of an institution of learning where religion is altogether ignored, or where its teachings by the home fireside are either openly ridiculed, or covertly undermined?

I have thus passed over, as rapidly and as briefly as I could, some of the difficulties that lie in the way of the early conversion of our children to God. Dear Christian brethren, can we not, with the help of the Lord, roll these difficulties out of the way? Can we not, and will we not, suffer the little children to come unto Jesus, and forbid them not? Shall our unfaithfulness stand in the way of the blessings of that covenant-keeping God, who visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children? Will not every parent who reads this little book, and thinks of the priceless value of the immortal souls of his children, before he lays the volume down, weigh carefully the considerations that have been presented, and enter

anew into covenant with God, resolving that, by His grace, every barrier shall be removed, and every encouragement and assistance rendered to the little ones, to deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow Jesus.

APPENDIX.

Appendix.

THERE is no evidence of the unity of the Church of Christ more striking than that referred to by the apostle, when he says: "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." The sorrow of one of God's people is a family sorrow. Christian hearts are knit together by the bonds of a sympathy akin to that of Him who "is afflicted in all their afflictions;" who is "touched with the feeling of their infirmities, whose sacred office it is to "bear our griefs and carry our sorrows."

These testimonials of love and sympathy, which are appended to this volume, are, there-

fore, precious, not only as mementoes of past affection and sympathy, but as evidences to those who are now afflicted, and into whose hands they may fall, that the prayers and tears of loving hearts attend them in their periods of bereavement and sorrow.

It is not necessary to say that these letters have been written with no view to publication. They are the outgushings of warm hearts, pouring their words of condolence into the private ear of friendship. And yet it is hoped that no breach of propriety is made in placing words which have been so comforting to those for whom they were immediately designed, where they may be the means of carrying the same precious consolation to other stricken hearts.

Soon after the death of Hart, which occurred on the 28th of November, 1866, a large number of letters came from Christian brethren, in various parts of the Southern Church, all freighted with words of tender sympathy and Christian consolation. From these, only a few can be selected. The first of these is from the

pen of the Rev. J. H. Gray, D. D., of La Grange, Tenn., who, under date of November 29th, 1866, only the day after the death of the noble boy, writes as follows:

My Dearly Beloved Brother: Hearing of your sudden and deep affliction, and wishing to say some word of comfort, and not knowing what to say, I did as the disciples did on the sudden and violent death of John the Baptist, "went and told Jesus." I then turned to the Bible, the great repository of light and comfort. I knew that you had often opened this fountain to others, in the time of their calamity, and given them sweet consolation. And now I only wish to refresh your pure mind, by way of remembrance, for I know that sudden and powerful strokes seem to paralyze the faculties of the soul for a season. You will, therefore, pardon me while I direct your thoughts to a few great truths contained in the Bible.

First. The Bible teaches that afflictions come from God. "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: I kill and I make

alive; I wound and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand. (Deut. 32: 39.) "The Lord killeth and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." (1 Sam. 2: 6.) "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." (Job 5: 6.) "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." (Ps. 39: 9.)

Second. The Bible teaches that afflictions are beneficial, and are proofs to God's people of His love, and not of His anger. "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; for He maketh sore and bindeth up: He woundeth and His hands make whole." (Job 5: 17 and 18.) "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O, Lord." (Ps. 94: 12.) "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction, for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (Prov. 3: 11 and 12.) "For they verily chastened us after their own pleasure, but He, for our

profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." (Heb. 12: 10 and 11.)

Third. Take some cases recorded in the Bible of God's dealings with His own children. One of the excellencies of the Bible is, that it is biographical. It is not a collection of abstract principles, or theological maxims, but a living illustration of these truths, exhibited in the every day experience of humanity. Revelation is drawn out in living characters.

1st. The case of Job. We have the testimony of God Himself, that he was "a perfect man; one that feared God, and eschewed evil." Yet wave after wave of sorrow rolls over him. One messenger of evil after another is sent with sad tidings. (See Job, chapter 1.) How does he act, and what does he say? "He fell down on the ground, and worshipped, and said: Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and

the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." This case proves the truth, that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.

2d. The case of Aaron. He is called of God to be the High Priest of His chosen people. This high honour and exaltation cannot, or does not, prevent the chastening of the Lord. His two sons, Nadab and Abihu, who seemed to be associated with him in the services of the sanctuary, transgressed the ordinances of God, and a fire from the Lord devoured them, and they died. When his brother, Moses, communicated the sad event to him, the simple and instructive record is, "And Aaron held his peace." (Lev. 10: 3.) He was dumb with silence, because God did it. This is another proof of the saying: Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.

3d. The case of Eli, another Priest of the Lord. His high office and holy character cannot shield him from the rod of affliction. When Samuel, who had received the knowledge of the impending calamity directly from the Lord, communicated the vision to Eli, and hid nothing from him, Eli said: "It is the Lord:

let Him do what seemeth Him good." (1 Sam. 3: 18.)

So it has been in all past time, and so it will be in all coming time, as it is at the present. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Therefore, my brother, "despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction."

Now, in reference to the cases cited, there is very little to comfort the hearts of the parents as to the future happiness of their sons, except, perhaps, Job; yet they meekly bowed to His will. But when you look to the future, and follow the spirit of your departed son, you can say, with David, "I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me." He was too ripe for earth; too pure and lovely to dwell in these low grounds of sin and death; and hence his early translation to the heavenly world, where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

I need not repeat the dying expressions of your noble boy. They are precious and hallowed sayings. Thus,

> "In calm unruffled peace,
> Like the mild glory of the setting sun,"

he passed away from earth, to dwell for ever in the bosom of his God.

In conclusion, let me say, the moral influence of such a life, brief as it was, cannot be lost. Not only his life, but his death, was a testimony for Jesus. He was more than a conqueror. His was a translation, rather than a death. There was grief, but no gloom in that chamber. The glory of heaven seemed to illumine it. His sun went down without a cloud. The weary pilgrim rested on the celestial Canaan, and was welcomed by angels and by Christ.

My dear brother, while this letter is addressed to you, it is intended also to cheer the heart of that honoured, but deeply stricken one, the mother of your boy. Just let me say to her:

"O, when a mother meets on high
The boy she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then, for pains and fears,
The day of woe and watchful night,
For all her sorrow, all her tears,
An over payment of delight?"

Your sympathizing friend and brother,

J. H. GRAY.

A week later than this, came the following exceedingly tender and characteristic letter, from Rev. Joseph R. Wilson, D. D., who had just returned to his home, in Augusta, Ga., from the meeting of the Assembly, and who, like Dr. Gray, had been present at the death-bed of Hart.

AUGUSTA, *December* 6, 1866.

MY BELOVED BROTHER: I did not reach home until Saturday night. I would have written you immediately upon my arrival. Many causes have prevented, principally the fact that no words of mine, or of man's, could reach the measure of your great sorrow. Well did I know that only God could effectually speak to

your distressed heart, so as to calm and cheer it. I did not dare to intrude into that sanctuary of grief, where He and yourself were engaged in holding communion, until, under the influence of His healing presence, you might again be ready to open an ear to the sympathies of your earthly friends, with something like composure. Oh, how my heart has bled for you, and for your dear wife, and for your remaining children. I have tried to pray for you, as I could wish you to pray for me under similar circumstances. I trust that these prayers, ascending to heaven from my poor heart, have mingled with those of your brethren everywhere, as also with your own; and that they have found acceptance with Him who sitteth on the throne. I trust that you have, ere this, experienced their answer, so as to be enabled to say, in the true spirit of gospel acquiescence, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away," and "blessed be the name of the Lord." The blow which you received was terrible; the waters of affliction, into which you have been plunged, have proved deep and roar-

ing; the whole shock to your affectionate paternal heart, has been overwhelming; but I believe you have already had reason to bless the hand that delivered the sudden and awful stroke, and to kiss it in the quietness of a profound and sweet submission. I need not remind you of what your own soul has been preaching to you, that after all it was *love* which let loose the descending rod upon your fondest earthly hopes, and I trust that this same love has again revealed itself to you in light and comfort.

Never shall I forget the last moments of your now sainted boy. What blessed assurances they gave of his complete preparedness for a better world! How graciously, and how surprisingly did Christ sustain him in the final struggle with death! His hopes were as bright and as intelligent as faith wrought by the Holy Spirit could make them. I felt, and still feel, that this departure ought not to be styled dying, but living. His young life was not quenched, but quickened into sudden and glorious maturity. He seemed to *see* his Saviour,

and the sight chased away all fears from his soul; in their stead appeared the bright forms of confidence and holy desire. He left behind him the best testimony of his entire and conscious acceptance with his Redeemer and Portion. He reached, at one bound, the blissful shores of that heavenly world, where you will one day behold him, dressed in righteousness and crowned with everlasting honour. You cannot mourn *for him*. He is certainly safe *at home*. Think of his noble intellectual powers, as expanding there at the right hand of God. Think of the rapturous happiness of that heart, whose affections were so strong and so pure. Think of that deep cup of knowledge, of whose contents he has begun to drink; of that deep well of love, of whose waters he has begun to taste; of that serene country, amid whose exalted citizenship he has taken his allotted place. Happy, happy boy! Not even his father, or his mother, can wish him back. They can only think of him as a member of that redeemed family, of which God is the Father, and Jesus Christ the Elder

Brother. How willingly we ought to part with all our kindred, on the terms which have signalized the glorification of this young immortal.

Nature must, indeed, have her tribute of tears at the loss *you* have experienced; but let grace come in to claim her higher and better tribute of praise to God at the gain *he* has made. But I will not multiply words. You know all that can be said. You feel all that ought to be felt.

Your affectionate and faithful friend and brother,

JOSEPH R. WILSON.

The following extract from a letter from Rev. Wm. L. Breckenridge, D. D., of Kentucky, received about the same time, or a little later, will be read with interest by those who knew and loved in better days this noble-hearted Christian man.

"It was not until this evening that I heard of the sore distress which it has pleased God to send upon your house. I have just read in the *Southern Presbyterian* of the 20th inst., a letter

from your nephew to Rev. Dr. Adger, relating the death of your dear little boy. My heart impels me to tell you, though it be in no more than a few hurried lines, how sorrowfully and how tenderly I condole with you in this affliction.

"I feel sure that you will not deem it an intrusion. Although we have been so long separated, and so far apart in distance, our ancient, unbroken friendship is very fresh with me, and I allow myself to hope, not less so with you. Our meeting at St. Louis revived many recollections, which I have kept alive with great pleasure since that time. I followed you with much interest through your late work at Memphis. * * * It never once occurred to me, that the next news of you would be of this nature. It has come over me with a terrible shock. But I know that the Lord will be your stay and comfort, the more because He has given you such ground for consolation in the assurance of the dying grace He was pleased to bestow upon the child in marvellous abundance. I think I know how you feel: with a

heart broken, and yet most graciously bound up. You will not be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."

A few months after the receipt of these letters, came one from Rev. Dr. Howe, of the Theological Seminary, Columbia, S. C., bearing expressions of warm sympathy in the same bereavement to which the previous ones bear reference. Under date of April 13th, 1867, he says:

"I have just received your letter of the 8th inst. The sadness which oppresses *your* heart deeply affects my own, and revives the purpose I had of writing you on my return from the Assembly, in the language of sympathy. A recurrence of my own ill health then prevented me, and I knew that the whole church felt for you in your sorrow, and remembered you in their prayers. And what was I but one, and that an unworthy one, among the hosts of our Israel? But I remember, when my own dear and noble boy lay down in his cold, damp tent, on one of the cold mountains of Virginia, and died after a long and painful illness, and I

reached him only to see him breathe his last breath, and hear him express his dying faith in Christ, how my own heart struggled in its deep grief, and tried to lean on all God's promises, and to school itself into submission and rest. And I can feel for you, my brother. Nor do I wonder that your sorrow should be renewing itself day after day, and sadness be dwelling around your hearth. And yet we know that the Judge of all the earth will do, and has done, right. And He will not have us 'to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that we sorrow not even as others which have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore comfort one another with these words.'

"And now, my dear brother, God's people

have been comforting one another with these words these eighteen hundred and thirteen years, ever since Paul wrote them at Corinth, in the first of his epistles to the church. And now I would strive to comfort you and my own heart with these same words. And though you have them in your own Bible, that lies before you, yet I send them to you. Heaven is a peopled place, and no solitude. It is gathering up our dearest friends, the loved ones of earth, God's own elect, lifted from the dunghill of earth to sit among princes, and be kings and priests unto Himself. Nor will it be long before we join them in the presence of that Redeemer whom we love. Wherefore, *let* us comfort one another with these words, and resolve to wait, in faith and patience, our appointed time, till our change come.

"May God be gracious to you, and assuage more and more the sorrows of your heart, and give you strength of body to labour many years in His honourable service.

"Your friend and brother in Christ our Lord,

GEO. HOWE."

Along with these letters, which came from eminent ministers in various parts of the Southern church, bringing assurance of the sympathy of the whole church in the affliction of its venerated servant, there is one from a warm-hearted Christian woman in Virginia, whose words of tender sympathy have fallen upon many an ear like the ripple of the cool waters of Siloam upon the ear of the thirsty traveller. She says:

"Though personally a stranger, will you allow me to offer you my most heartfelt sympathy and earnest prayers, that the loving Saviour may be with you and yours, to comfort and bless? In such seasons of sore trial, no other comforter can be of any avail. Our household passed through a similar trial in 1863, when a darling boy of four years old was taken away, and the father was across the ocean, among strangers, and with an enemy's fleet to encounter before he could reach his home. *Then*, if never before, we felt the preciousness of 'one common mercy seat,' and one Saviour present

with us all to fill our aching hearts with His loving presence.

"The enclosed scrap of poetry, written by Rev. Dr. Deems, for a friend of mine in North Carolina, always seemed to me pretty and comforting. The Lord comfort you out of Zion."

The "scrap of poetry," to which the writer refers, is the following, which, for its sentiment, as well as for its poetic merit, deserves to be placed among the treasures of the children of affliction.

OUTSIDE AND IN.

I stood beside a swinging gate,
The two great worlds dividing;
Outside poor sinners weep and wait,
Inside are saints residing.

How grim and dark and dread is seen,
The outside of that portal,
Whose inside's glorious golden sheen
Streams on the eyes immortal.

Outside, the winds of Winter shriek,
With howl and lamentation;
Inside, melodious accents speak
Of Spring's regeneration.

Outside, I saw the snow-clad grave
Of a babe who had just been dying;
Inside, his feet, winged and fleet,
O'er fields of light were flying.

Outside, I heard a father's plaint,
And a mother's cry outbreaking;
Inside, there shouted many a saint,
At the babe's new saintly waking.

Outside, bereaved children wept
O'er little steps retreating;
Inside, the cherub's harpstrings swept,
The new born cherub greeting.

Outside were war, and want, and woe,
Graves, and homes melancholy;
Inside, the landscape stood a-glow
In soft light, still and holy.

Outside, upon a cross of blood,
Hung God's great victim dying;
Inside, on throne he radiant shone,
And angels heard him crying:

"Outside, O men! are death and sin;
Inside, the Life Immortal;
Fear not to let your loved ones in
To Life, through Death's dark portal."

We might multiply these letters of condolence to any extent, but it will probably be best to add but one other. Many of our readers will take a melancholy pleasure in perusing a letter from the pen of that noble man, William Garvin, of Louisville, Ky., who stood shoulder to shoulder with our brethren of the Louisville Presbytery, in their celebrated defence of the Declaration and Testimony; whose warm heart and liberal purse contributed so largely to the Kentucky Relief Fund, for the impoverished ministers of the South, at the close of the war, and who, after a life spent in great honour and usefulness, was suddenly removed from earth by the disastrous burning of the steamer *United States*, on the night of December 5th, 1868.

This letter was addressed to Dr. Kerr, only a few days after the death of Hart; and as the expression, though in plain and homely phrase, of the Christian emotion of one who was himself ripe for heaven, and was soon to be translated thither, as it were upon a chariot of fire, it will possess a double interest for our readers:

LOUISVILLE, *December* 8, 1866.

MY DEAR FRIEND: Your brother's letter to me was received some days since, giving me the melancholy and distressing news of the death of your dear and only son. I cannot express to you my feelings on its receipt. To think that, on the last Sabbath of the General Assembly, I rode with him on the cars, and that in less than three days he was riding on the triumphant car of glory, to be amidst a General Assembly that never breaks up. Although I feel for you and your family the deepest sympathy for your natural feelings, yet, how ought you to rejoice that you have a son in glory.

Happy father, mother, and sisters! to know you have a son and brother awaiting you in heaven. You have great reason to believe that, before the last sigh was past on earth, he took up the song of the redeemed, and is now saying: Mourn not for me. If you loved me, you will rejoice, because I have gone to my Father.

Our Heavenly Father knows what is best. If He took him early in life it was to save him from some rough blast. If he entered the port of

glory soon, it was because He foresaw some threatening tempest screened from our limited vision. He has entered in to prove the rest that remaineth. The pangs of separation none but parents can know. Those, and those only, who, like myself, have suffered these pangs of bereavement can enter into your sorrow. You, my dear friend, have cause to rejoice, for your son is not dead, but liveth. At this very moment, when your tears are falling, his spirit is soaring in the realms of everlasting day, safely at home. Dry, therefore, your tears; an early death-bed has been an early crown, and the ties which are sundered here bring you nearer to the throne of God.

Happy family! You have a son, a brother in heaven. You are now the relatives of a ransomed saint. Let this thought dry up your tears. The period of your mourning is counted by days; your eternal rejoicing by cycles and eras. I think I hear you saying, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?" "O God, thou art my hope."

The voice calls to you, as to Abraham of old, to prepare for bitter trial. Be it yours to respond with Abraham, "Here am I." Remember He chastens because He loves. You can join in the prayer of one of old: "When my heart is overwhelmed within me, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." He is *the Rock*, and yet *a man*, mighty to compassionate, Immanuel, God with us.

What was the cause of your dear son's death? My wife and myself have supposed that it might have been a congestive chill, as he had had chills, we understood, before we left Memphis. Excuse this hasty scrawl. I write from my heart. I have been suffering with neuralgia in my head for some days; am some better to-day. All well. My wife and family all join me in much love and assurances that you have our deepest sympathies and prayers.

May the blessing of our covenant God abide upon you and yours, is the prayer of

Your assured friend,

William Garvin.

The answer to this letter, written by the bereaved father, expressive at once of the depth of human sorrow, and the power of divine grace to sustain and console, forms a fitting conclusion to this memorial volume.

SHELBY COUNTY, TENN., *January* 25, 1867

MR. WILLIAM GARVIN,

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER: I write a line to convey to you the thanks of my whole family for your exceedingly kind, Christian letter, in which you express so much of true sorrow for us, under our crushing bereavement, and in which you so tenderly and affectingly point us to the only true sources of comfort and support.

Next to the divine, there is scarcely anything that could afford a stricken heart the solace and comfort imparted by the sympathies of Christian friends. In this respect God has, in the most remarkable manner, mingled goodness and love with His dreadful smitings. From many of our most esteemed brethren and friends in South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi,

Virginia, Kentucky, New York, and many other sections, we have been in the constant receipt of letters, all breathing the tenderest sympathy and concern for us. Indeed, the tender, loving spirit of our blessed Christianity, has been most strikingly and touchingly illustrated, in that so many, whose faces we have never seen, moved by its divine impulses, have written us the most touching and affecting expressions of sorrow in this our day of darkness. The papers, too, of our dear brethren, Drs. Robinson, Brown, Rice, Woodrow, and Adger, have come to us freighted with tears and love.

And yet, my dear friend, *there* lies the shadow of death upon our door-sill, as sickening and appalling as ever. Tears are mingled with our drink. We sit down at the table to eat our bread with thankfulness, but the "vacant chair makes us all silent, whilst the smitten mother is driven away to pour out her grief all alone. In a thousand ways, and as often every day, we are reminded that one of the brightest lights of our earthly happiness has gone down for ever. Oh, this *heart* void! this *heart* aching!

this consuming memory of hopes blasted; hopes watered with so many tears, cherished with so many prayers; hopes we had allowed to stretch over the track of our whole earthly future; all, all buried so suddenly, so unexpectedly, in the dust of death. We often turn our eyes on the dear ones left us in quest of comfort; but as they crouch down by our sides, and at our feet, appalled by the suddenness and terribleness of the shock *they* too have felt, and we gaze on their faces, blanched as if they, too, were smitten, an involuntary shudder passes horribly over our crushed hearts, and leaves us only with the sad feeling that our house is a damp, dreary cave, whose ceiling is curtained with the wing of death.

There is *his* little axe in the corner, and there are *his* little books upon the shelf, and we would put them away; but our devotion to him will not allow us to conceal what we know he loved. We remember, and we miss him, in the thousand little kind offices, in which he was ever so ready to serve and to please us. Even the winds to which we were wont to listen, to

bring to our ears the sounds of his animating and inspiring voice, now seem to howl and mourn around our house appalling and sickening dirges to expired pleasures.

Our walks, that were made cheerful and pleasant by his accompanying form, are now abandoned, and our stricken hearts start out in their solitary pilgrimages to his bed of dust, where tears run down our faces, as barren of peace and joy as if there were none to pity and to love. When we would bestir ourselves to the duties imposed by the stern vocations of life, and of Providence, alas! in a moment, we find our thoughts and feelings enchained in the busy work of digging down into his grave, to bring him back again to sweet companionship with our broken hearts. His angel is ever with us. Even the little moments of sleep and of rest we have been able to snatch on their hasty way, have been disturbed and broken by fitful and disappointing dreams of his coming. And then, when we remember that, like Paul's friends, we sorrowed most of all, that "we shall see his face no more," our poor hearts go plunging in

the dark waves and billows of a distress that seems to us to have no bottom and no shore. Dark world! dark world! Dark, indeed! The hand of our God is heavy upon us. All His waves and billows have gone over our heads, and we often grow dizzy and faint, as we think of the past, as we gaze upon the dark present, and contemplate the still more uninviting future.

Such, my dear friend, is the *natural*, the mere *human nature* aspect of our case, in this time of our dreadful bereavement, disappointment and sorrow. You will not, I am sure, rebuke us for this language of love and of sorrow, especially when I assure you that it is our constant effort to restrict our poor hearts within the limits of an enlightened Christian moderation. Dost thou hear the moanings of that lonely dove? She sighs for her absent mate. Dost thou see the fearful rage of that wild, ferocious beast. 'Tis for her imperilled young. And shall nature in her rudest, most untutored, humblest forms, speak the language of love and grief, and shall not the human kind, with a higher and more cultivated nature, feel deeply

and keenly when his bones are being broken, and his flesh consumed? Our children are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. And the tender, loving impulses of our natures, when stricken and bruised, must find expression for their sorrow and woes, or nature herself must sink down and die under the weight of an otherwise intolerable load.

And then see that solemn procession: it consists of the Christian friends of the martyred Stephen, carrying him to his burial, with great lamentation over him. Besides, "*Jesus wept.*"

But then there is another side to this dark picture—the divine side, where Jehovah stands alone, doing all His pleasure. And he who sees this side aright, will come in due time and sit down in the dust where God would put him, and say, even under the heaviest blows of His hand, "I was dumb; I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it."

"O Thou, who driest the mourner's tear,
How dark this world would be,
If pierced by sins and sorrows here,
We could not fly to thee!"

Yes, here, in these words, "Thou didst it," is to be found the true and only solution of all our perplexities, under the stunning blows that fall upon us often like thunderbolts from above. *They* strike a light for our blind eyes, that brings cheer and good hope to our stricken, aching bosoms, where, else, would brood a cheerless and perpetual night.

O, who could bear life's stormy doom,
Did not Thy wing of love,
Come, brightly wafting through the gloom,
Our peace branch from above?

Then sorrow touched by Thee grows bright,
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day.

The precious truth, from which we have sought most earnestly to derive the solace and comfort we have so much needed, and which, under other and similar afflictions, has been as the "poultice of figs" to our bruised souls, is this, *that the afflictions of God's people are divinely sent, and that, in all the aspects of them, they are the wisest and best allotments that could*

be made to them, seeing they are the conclusions, the judgments of the infinitely wise and loving nature of Jehovah; and that the great practical result should be to suppress and silence every complaining, fault-finding sentiment and feeling, and to bring our hearts quietly and acquiescingly to sit down at the Divine feet, and say, "We are dumb, because thou didst it."

The words, "Thou didst it," clearly express all that is meant by *Providence*—God superintending, directing, controlling, overruling, disposing all things according to the counsel of His will. The arguments that prove God, prove Providence, and so *vice versa*. So that, to deny Providence is to deny God. Whoever, therefore, does not recognize God in all that transpires under His divine administration, fulfilling His *actual* or *permissive* purposes, betrays his infidelity, and is on a shoreless sea of adventure, speculation, and darkness, knowing neither whither he shall drift, nor where he shall sink.

If God be governor, He must have subjects over whom He exercises His rule; and being

supreme, if He does not rule, it is because He either *cannot* or *will not*. The first of these suppositions is absurd and impious: the latter is also absurd, because it would argue indifference to the very things that do most strikingly illustrate His glory. To suppose that He governs a part of His universe, and is indifferent to the other part, is to draw a line where He has not authorized human wisdom to interpose its discriminations. Besides, the very idea of His supremacy implies universal dominion. Then, if He governs the whole, He must govern every part, for the whole is made up of its several parts, and must, therefore, include every part.

How this reasoning accords with sacred Scripture will appear, amongst a thousand things which there appear, by what is said of the falling sparrow, of the numbered hairs of our heads, of the provision made for the wild ravens, of the clothing of the grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; of the ice, and snow, and hoar frost, which He sendeth upon the earth, and of the way in which He melteth them again; how He rides upon the storm,

shaking the cedars of Lebanon, and causing the hinds to calve; how He doeth all His pleasure in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth; how, in the execution of His pleasure, He putteth down one and setteth up another.

I know, indeed, that this subject rises immeasurably above human capacity to comprehend, and to grasp in its mighty proportions. The universe itself, though only the footstool of the great Maker, can be seen by us only in a comparatively few compressed phases of it. Man's foundation is in the dust. His life is in his nostrils. The horizon of his vision is but a few miles distant, whilst all above, in infinite and incomprehensible space, revolve unnumbered worlds, compared with which ours is but the small dust of the balance. And yet this universe is but the evidence and the illustration of the still more incomprehensible and mysterious Maker. If, therefore, whilst we gaze upon the works of His fingers, we are "lost in wonder, love, and praise," how much more becoming is it, when we gaze on His infinite majesty, as He

reveals it in the severe mysteries of His providential dispensations, to be still, to be dumb, and, without a murmuring word, accept with holy reverence and with unshaken confidence in His rectitude, the divine, the humbling, and yet the consoling lesson, "Thou didst it."

God does not address Himself to the *comprehension* of His creatures. He is constantly announcing to them *facts*, *truths*, *propositions*, both in the kingdom of nature and of grace, and in the book of His providence; but then these facts and propositions, though clearly enough stated, and, it may be, understood as facts and propositions, do but reveal their *incomprehensible* Author. So that, whilst by them we may have discovered His being and purpose, we have not, and cannot, cast our thoughts halfway to the unscaled heights, and to the ineffable perfection of His transcendent and mysterious nature; or to the unsearchable purport of the great ideas contained in the propositions themselves. God, in all the deliverances of Himself to His creatures, must, of necessity, be incomprehensible. 'Tis the infinite speaking

to the finite. 'Tis the greater approaching to fill and bless the lesser. But, then, the less can never contain the greater. Always, and everywhere, therefore, and in every variety of speech and calling, He addresses Himself to the *faith* of mortals.

Even in the words of His grace, there are discovered heights, and depths, and breadths of love, which no human line can ever measure. So too, when by His providence He touches our persons, or our interests, we stand and look, and listen, but we see not His hand. No language or speech is heard. We only know 'tis God. And then we look up and listen again, and a voice comes from the excellent glory; but its words are addressed, not to our comprehension, but to our faith. "Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." But how that strength is communicated to us, how He puts His hand under our sinking hopes, and lifts up our desponding hearts to a heavenly calm, to a divine repose, we cannot comprehend. All we can know, all we can say, is, "We were brought

low, and He helped us." So that our office and duty, under the dispensations of Providence, is not so much to comprehend and to fathom His deep designs, as simply, earnestly, believingly to say, "Thou art all my trust." Indeed, the very darkness in which God often conceals Himself, and by which He renders unintelligible and mysterious so many of His dispensations, is designed to call into exercise this divine and heavenly grace.

No other principle than this, embraced with a steady faith, and attended with a corresponding behaviour, can give repose and tranquility to a troubled soul; can animate our crushed hopes or extinguish our corroding fears; can give us any true satisfaction in the *enjoyments* of life, or minister consolation under its adversities and bereavements. If we are persuaded that God governs the universe; that He has the superintendence and direction of all events, and that we are the objects of His paternal care, whatever may be our distress or danger, we can never want consolation; we may always have a fund of hope, always a

prospect of relief. But take away this hope and this prospect; take away the belief of God, and of a superintending special providence, and you at once remove from under us every stone of our foundations, and "if the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?"

But whoever, by such a faith, engages Jehovah on his side, has all the assurance that His sure word of testimony can impart, that "all things work together for good to them that love God"—not *shall* work, or may work, but work. All second causes *now* conspire to work together with God, the great First Cause; and all these *for good. All things* work. The proposition is universal. Evil things as well as good things; adversity as well as prosperity; sickness as well as health; death as well as life. Yes, "all things," under Divine, beneficent guidance, "work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose."

It must be so, for He Himself says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love;" not the ebullition of to-day; not a passion awakened by

the present circumstances of a present sorrow, but a devotion coeval with His immortal nature and being; a love which brings into requisition all the plannings and provisions of a precise, never-erring, consummate wisdom, to meet the weaknesses and wants, the sorrows and conflicts, the complex and turbulent existence of every child of His grace; a love that wakes up the strength of His Almighty arm, to lift off from their hearts the burdens and distresses that have accumulated beyond their strength to bear them; a love that pours out upon them its infinite treasures, day by day, according to their every exigency; a love which has already bestowed its richest, greatest gift, one which must abide as the certain pledge and proof that He will, with Him, also freely give us all things.

"And can my soul, with hopes like these,
Be sullen and repine?
No, gracious God, take what Thou wilt,
I'll cheerfully resign."

Guided and fortified by these, and similar considerations, I trust that we can, to some extent, see and feel that if God, the Governor

and Judge of the universe, is engaged in shaping and maturing, at every period of their history here, the characters of His people, and directing them to a specific and chosen destiny, it will certainly be in a way, and to a destiny that will not only be perfectly honourable to Himself, but infinitely satisfactory to us. Nay, more, I hope we are not without some experience of the high mystery, that the doctrine of providence, as it stands related to the grace of the gospel, is the true elixir of the broken heart. And although we are very sad, very lonely, separated during our future pilgrimage from our dear only son, and though tears still run down our faces, almost as fast as we wipe them away, we can look up even through our tears, and say, "Wear thy crown, sweet boy! We would not bring thee back. Wave thy palm of victory! Raise high thy song of praise! We are coming, and hope soon to see and join thee."

With assurances of our high esteem and love for yourself and family, I am, my dear friend and brother, Yours very truly,

ANDREW HART KERR.

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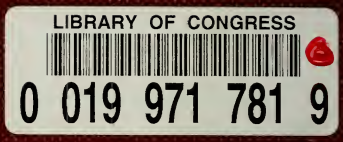
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